

THE COMPLETE PREACHER.

VOL. 2.

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY, 1878.

No. 5.

Eternal Punishment.

A SERMON

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Fill their faces with shame; that they may seek Thy name, O Lord. Let them be confounded and troubled forever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish; that men may know that Thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the Most High over all the earth.—Ps. lxxxiii: 16-18.

Some men would make sin a very light thing, and so count all teaching of everlasting punishment a monstrous error, wholly incongruous with our ideas of a just God. Others would make God the author of everything, sin included, and therefore responsible for all sin's enormity, and hence count the everlasting punishment of man an outrage on justice. God's revealed word strikes away the foundations of both these philosophic theories. It declares sin to be rebellion against the Holy Ruler of the Universe. It describes it as corrupting the whole being of man. It shows it to be abhorrent to a righteous God, putting the sinner out of all connection with the purity of heaven, and bringing necessarily upon him all the woes that separation from God implies. It further teaches that God in no sense whatever is the author of sin, that He never decreed it or encouraged it or connived at it, but that it is the offspring of man's unfettered will, and that on man alone is the responsibility. This world of mankind is not a machine made to go as it does by God's decrees. It is a world of independent wills, made independent in the likeness of God at the creation. God made man upright, but man sought out the many inventions of sin. God brought up and nourished children, but they rebelled against Him. To say that all this was pre-arranged and effected by God Himself is to say that His word is all a sham, and that His expostulations with the wicked are all gross hypocrisy. God declares that He wishes all men to come to repentance. What does this mean, if it does not mean that God both has no hand whatever in their sin, and also has offered His grace to all as far as He consistently could.

We are to take things as we find them, and not philosophize against facts and revelation. There is a war against God. The human heart is engaged in that war, and is an enemy to God.

All questions as to the origin of this war have nothing to do with altering the fact. War against God must be the most awful fact in the universe, and those who war against God must occupy the most fearful position imaginable. Now, all sin must be brought to this standard, and rank in this category, and all sinners must be seen in their true position before we can judge about the righteousness of eternal punishment. Know what the infinite holiness of God is, and know what war against that holiness is in the human heart, and there will be found all possible congruity between eternal sin and eternal punishment. The alienated race of man, as such, must suffer eternal death—that is, eternal banishment from God. The only exception is Christ Jesus, the only sinless man and those who are in Him. The hand on the head of the sacrifice betokened this union from the beginning. He, as sinless, could suffer for all those who would unite themselves to Him and receive His Spirit. There is nothing strange in eternal punishment, but something very strange in salvation. Men talk about eternal punishment as if it were an *ab extra* work of God forever scourging souls for past sins, and so they very naturally conclude from these premises that God might stop scourging if He wished to, and let man up, and then man would be happy. But this is a very erroneous notion of the punishment of hell. The sinners' torture is the operation of their own sin. "Where *their* worm never dies and *their* fire is never quenched"—the worm and the fire are not in God's hand, but in the sinner's heart. The sinner could not be happy because he hates God and holiness. If he could not be attracted to holiness in this world, he certainly cannot be in the next, where every passion must be intenser in the developed powers of the soul. So the next world to the sinner must be just what his conscience here gives forebodings of—a world of sin and agony forever and forever. Some, who see this must be so if the sinner is to survive, jump to the conclusion that he will be annihilated as by a merciful act of God. But this is a mere fancy, and proposed directly against God's revealed word. Eternal *punishment* is not annihilation. If it be punishment at the moment of annihilating, it certainly is not punishment afterward. You cannot punish a being who does not exist. Destruction and death do not mean annihilation, but the ruin of the soul away from God—its misery and torture. The view of Dives in hell shows us what the destruction and death of the wicked are.

If annihilation were the issue, *dying in one's sins* would not be so awful a thing as Christ held it up to the Jews to be. But apart from Scripture, if God is too good (for that is the cant phrase they use) to punish, and therefore will annihilate, why does His goodness allow Him to see men suffer such torments as many do in *this* life? Why does he not annihilate all who

otherwise would be wretched at their birth? You see what folly all our reasoning *à priori* about God's ways will land us in! We go back to His word, and there see that as the righteous go into everlasting life so the wicked go into everlasting punishment. The same word is used for both. It is the word of all others that would be selected for the idea. No human word can express *eternity* as we approximately conceive it in our minds. The very word "eternity," when etymologically analyzed, only means "a very long time." That is owing to the weakness of human speech, as the offspring of a weak and finite mind. Just as we say "*infinite*," that is, "not finite," which is as near a term as we can get for the idea, so we say "*eternal*," that is, "*very long*," for the idea of that which never ends. This very word "*never*," which I have just used in the definition, is open to the same analysis. So exceedingly foolish is it to argue on this subject from the weakness of the word "eternal." There is too much readiness in some quarters to correct God's Word, as if little man, who only sees what is just about him, could legislate for the universe and for eternity, and determine what ought and what ought not to be. The humble heart will search God's Word thoroughly and take what God says, finding there a safe foundation which it cannot find in human speculation. It is the proud heart that recoils from God's Word, as it constantly shows the fearful and deadly character of sin and the responsibility of man. It is because of the frightful doom of the sinner that the Word of God holds up so clearly the future, that man may be warned and fly to the only refuge, even to the arms of the Divine Redeemer. The imprecatory Psalms are a part of such warning. They are the inspired foretokeners of the awful consequences of sin; and not only are they warnings to the wicked, but they are comforts to God's people as showing them the end of the contest against wickedness and the triumph of holiness over the foes of God. They are terrible in their language, because they treat of terrible truths. Scoffing men love to say that they are vindictive and cruel, forgetting that they are the utterances of God through His prophets against the persistent criminals at His bar, and hence all that is cruel is made so by their own guilt. When an earthly judge says of a notorious murderer, "Let him be hanged by the neck till he is dead," is he cruel? Is he not using the language of justice which finds an echo in every conscience? And shall not the Judge of all the earth do *right*? Shall He not pronounce the sentence sin demands? Or shall He confound sin and righteousness together by a mercy which would itself only be weakness and sin, and treat the stout rebel as a tender and contrite child?

When God speaks it is not man with his envies, jealousies, hatreds, anger, selfishness and sin, but it is infinite purity,

holiness, truth, righteousness, goodness and love, and His words are not to be judged by a human standard. *Sin* is the awful fact with us, and we must humbly bow before God as He defines it and declares its doom. Blessed be God that we have a secure shelter in the Lord Jesus, a covert from the tempest, an ark of salvation, where we can hear the threatenings of justice with calm and peaceful minds!

In the text five points of doom are specified. The ungodly are to have their faces filled with shame; they are to be confounded; they are to be troubled; they are to be put to shame; they are to perish. What is meant by these particulars?

(1) *To fill their faces with shame* is to write their wickedness on their persons, so that all can see what their character is. Here on earth men are hypocrites and hide their true character. Under the aspect of gentleness they conceal a heart at war with God. But some even here break through the disguise, and their depravity shows itself already to all. That which is done partially here will be done thoroughly hereafter. The secrets of all hearts shall be made manifest. The enemy of God shall have his name emblazoned on his forehead, and all shall see the fitness of his doom.

(2) *To be confounded* is to be filled with dismay and terror—to lose all their self-confidence—to realize their true situation, which they had hitherto succeeded in concealing from themselves; when engaged so absorbingly in their own schemes against God they hide God's justice and its progress from their own eyes; when their own schemes ultimately fail and they can no longer hide their attention in *them*, their helpless and hopeless condition as aliens from God in affection and character, in a confirmed growth of sinfulness, ever augmenting itself, will strike them with appalling fear—not a fear that leads to repentance, softening the heart and humbling it before God—they have gone too far for that. Moral character hardens into adamant with its practices, whether good or evil; and when a man has persisted in revolt against God he at length becomes unchangeable in his opposition to holiness, so that the terror that then may come upon him at sight of his peril is one that would lead him to cry to the rocks and the mountains, but not to God.

(3) *To be troubled* is to feel the workings of sin in all their fulness, unrestrained by the divine grace, which in this world is generally more or less active in the hearts and lives of the wicked. *Sin is trouble*. It is the action of every faculty of the soul, contrary to the design of the Creator, producing a spiritual friction and pain in each. Now, when this becomes thoroughly developed the soul experiences unutterable agony. Even in this world there have been innumerable instances where hell has begun on earth, and the fierce tortures of the

spirit have turned the man to a demon, or driven him to suicide, as if he could kill the soul when he should kill the body.

(4) *To be put to shame* is to feel no longer the lofty defiance which for a time made headway against rebuke, entreaty and correction, but to feel the contempt of one's own soul so as to endeavor (all in vain) to hide from one's self. A Christian, when abhorring himself, can fly to God, but the wicked soul abhorring itself has no whither to fly. It is doomed to stay in its own dreary company and bear the distressing weight of its own shame. An eternal conviction with no conversion—what can be more terrible than that? It is being chained fast to everything we loathe, held in the embrace of all that excites our disgust.

(5) *To perish* is to continue *forever* in the conditions just described. The word in the second clause is the echo of the word "forever" in the first clause. The two parts answer to one another. "Let them be confounded and troubled forever; yea, let them be put to shame and perish." The "being confounded" and "being put to shame" (as we have seen) are analogous, dismay and disgust being the two sides of the same wretched, godless experience; and so the "being troubled forever" and the "perishing" are analogous, representing the internal workings of depravity, with a pang in every stroke. In vain do some strive to explain such words as *perishing* and *destruction* by *annihilation*. The Scripture explains itself. It speaks of a *torment day and night forever and ever* (Rev. xx: 10), and tells us of those who shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb, the smoke of whose torment ascendeth up forever and ever. That this is a figure is very evident, but it is equally clear that it figuratively pictures to us a punishment that never has an end.

But, say some, why dwell on such horrid topics? Why not preach the love of Christ? We must do what God's Word does. We must preach the love of Christ, and also show the frightful truth of eternal misery. The gospel is a savor of life, and also a savor of death. It saves and it hardens. It takes to heaven and sends to hell. Before the great and awful fact of sin it can deal in no compliments and pretty things. It is a question of eternal life or eternal death—of everlasting joy through Christ or everlasting wretchedness through sin. The gospel, moreover, warns *in order to save*. "That man may know that Thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art most high over all the earth." These are the words of the text. The word of God would have men see the wicked go down to doom in order that God's grace may be accepted and the wretched procession cease. Even here on earth the spectacle of men given over by their sins to stolid indifference or persistent atheism is an enacted warning to others lest they too sin away their

days of grace. The phrase in the 16th verse has the same bearing, "Fill their faces with shame that they may seek Thy name, O Lord." The last verb is impersonal. The phrase is, "Fill the faces of the rebellious with shame, that men may seek Thy face, O Lord." Let the sin and wretchedness of their hearts be so inscribed on their lives that men may take warning and avoid their doom by yielding to the mercy of God, which is in Jesus Christ, who is the *name* of God as He is the *word* of God. There is a written gospel to which we are to give heed, but there is also the illustration of that gospel in the Church of Christ, on one hand, finding peace and joy, and in the wicked, on the other, who have no peace, but are ever restless and unsatisfied, anticipating their doom in the disquiet of their souls. He is the wise man who opens his eyes to these illustrative facts, and casts his lot with those who accept the gospel and its redeeming grace.

There is one other aspect of these imprecatory Psalms to which we must allude before closing. *The imprecations are in man's mouth.* How can that be, without making man a mere curser of his brethren? The answer is this: That as men draw near to God they see things as God sees them. The holier the heart is, the more it is struck with abhorrence at all persistent enmity to God's holiness. It ranges itself on God's side, and sympathizes with Him in His justice, and so invokes in His name the curse that holiness must bring upon sin. It looks forward to the final triumph of truth over falsehood, of righteousness over wickedness, and in the spirit of prophecy it calls down the final doom upon the ungodly. There is no personal revenge or low human delight in misery in such an attitude, but an identification of the soul with all that is pure and true. It is a false religion that paints everything rose color, and salves over sin with sentimentality. It is a false religion that does not see the storm as well as the sunshine, the lightning bolt as well as the serene sky. Men are ever trying with their conceited philosophies to do away with everything that is hard and repulsive. *They forget sin.* While sin lasts there must be the harsh and the repulsive. There must be judgment and wrath, there must be misery and anguish. And if they can show us how sin will end, we may be ready to hear of some limit to the misery and anguish. But that they cannot do while God's Word is clear and distinct in its terrible utterances of eternal banishment from the presence of God into the outer darkness, where is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. If there is a soul here to-day who has not fled for safety to the only Saviour, I call upon him now, while this dreadful subject is before him, and while God is waiting to be gracious, to yield at once to the call of the Most High. Delay to-day may harden your heart and seal your doom. Come unto me, says our dear Lord, and I will give you rest.

Christ, the Restorer.

A SERMON

PREACHED BY Theodore L. Cuyler, D.D.

He restoreth my soul.—Psalms xxii: 3.

The twenty-third is everybody's favorite among the Psalms. There are certain chapters in God's Word that seem to link themselves to almost every human heart, having an adaptation to every line of life and every description of circumstances. So it is that from childhood, on even to gray hairs, there is no one Psalm so often read, so often prayed, so often sung, as this shepherd's Psalm of David. Nay, it is a sort of nightingale among the minstrels of the Psalter; for, as it is the habit of that bird to sing amidst the silence and darkness of the night, so it seems as if this exquisite little psalm makes itself heard in the gloom of the Valley of Death, and makes its nest, as it were, in these deep gorges of life, so that those called to walk there not only have the rod and the staff, but the sweet note of Heaven's love sounding in their ears. One of the sweetest, one of the richest, of these God-given songs in the night is this twenty-third Psalm, the pastoral chant of the shepherd David. And have you not observed that it comes right after the twenty-second, which I am inclined to think is something more than a mere coincidence? The twenty-second is the Psalm of the Cross and of Redemption. In the twenty-second we have Christ crucified; then, when the way is prepared by this Messianic revelation, then it is that we are brought into this beautiful study and enjoyment of Him as the Shepherd and the Restorer of the soul. For I shall speak this morning of Jesus as the Restorer; not vaguely of the restoring love of God, but specifically of Jesus Christ as a Restorer, bearing in mind all the while that Jesus appears to us as the Shepherd, for that was His own description of Himself. "I am the Good Shepherd; I lay down my life for the sheep." All that chapter in the book of John, in which Jesus Christ describes Himself as the Good Shepherd, flows right out of this twenty-third Psalm as the natural New Testament sequel; so that to-day let us think of Jesus as the Shepherd who restores the wanderer, as the Shepherd who puts back in the fold what has gone astray, as the Shepherd who guards and feeds, as the Shepherd who will finally bring home His own flock into glory.

Then, in the first place, let us talk and think of Jesus as the home-bringer of the wandering sheep—for the original mean-

ing of the Hebrew word is to *bring back*. "He is bringing back my soul" is the Saxon translation, and the closest, probably, to the original. Bringing back implies wandering, a far astray condition of the heart, a dwelling in the "far country" of sin, so that Christ goes out to seek and to save the wandering soul. Oh! how beautifully comes in here that passage, "All we like sheep have gone astray; every one of us had turned to his own or her own ways," and then God laid on the Shepherd, the Restorer, "the iniquities of us all."

Three features appear conspicuous here under this head. The alliteration will help you remember them. These are, RUIN, REDEMPTION, RESTORATION. Every one of us was ruined through wandering; every one of us was in a state of guilt hereditarily and afterwards by actual transgression. That state of guilt in which you and I were by nature was a state of alienation from God—a state in which there is an entire loss of original righteousness—a state in which the whole head is sick and the whole heart faint by corruption—a state of exposure to the justice and wrath of God here, and to the pains of perdition hereafter and forever. That is the state of ruin—just such ruin as a voluntary transgression brings. It is a ruin from which no one ever yet recovered himself any more than the fallen pillars of Balbec could by their own power put themselves on their vacant pedestals to-morrow morning—nay, any more than you would expect a resurrection in Greenwood Cemetery this hour. Bear in mind, in the first place, that the ruin by sin is complete.

The next point is *redemption* through Christ. It is purchasing by Calvary's blood salvation for the wandering sheep—making it not only possible that the wandering soul *may* be saved, but certain that the wandering soul *will* be saved when it is once in the hands of Christ. Oh, I have no patience in preaching an atonement which barely makes salvation possible! If redemption by the blood of Calvary means anything, 't means the positive and everlasting recovery and security of all those for whom Jesus shed His blood; and all those that accept that blood and put themselves in the Shepherd's hands for restoration are forever safe. And how this doctrine gushes out with tenderness! Full of sweetness is it, like a honeycomb; how it drips with love! It is a redemption, not for angels, seraphim and cherubim, but for beggars, outlaws, and willful, disobedient, ungrateful rebels. That is what redemption means. It means that the worse a man is, the more God pities him. The very murderers that put Jesus to death had the very first offer of His love; as if Christ had said to them: "Go to Jerusalem and tell them they can get at my heart in a better way than with a spear. They need but to come with the prayer of faith and they shall **be** saved." This love is

lavished even upon the wanderer. I have heard the story of a father whose son, having had too much to spend at home for his own good, ran away, after the fashion of the Prodigal Son, and led a wild, reckless career in California. Report came to his father from time to time of bad things, of worse things, and of still worse; letters were sent to the erring boy, which remained unanswered, until, finally, the father, meeting a man who was going to San Francisco, gave him his son's address, and said: "Look him up, and just tell him that his father has never ceased to love him as much as ever, in spite of his sinful course." The man hunted San Francisco through, until he found the young man one evening in a gambling-house. He beckoned him out, and in the street he told him his name, when he had left his father, and why he had sought him. "Your father," said the gentleman, "said I should look you up here, and should tell you from him that *he loves you yet!*" The young man dropped his head and the tears started. "Oh, my God!" said he, "did my father say he loved me yet?" How many an one has laid his broken heart upon the mercy-seat and cried, "O God! canst Thou love me again?—me, the sinner—me, the rejecter of Thy grace—me, the trampler on the blood of Thy Son—me, who have done despite to Thy Holy Spirit—canst thou love me yet?" Yes, Christ, the Restorer, does love and redeems by love, and recovers such by the power of His love.

That is the third "R"—Ruin first; Redemption, by the blood of Christ, second; and, third, Recovery. Restoration is the word more in the line of our text; and this restoration, by Jesus Christ, restores to God's favor one who has wandered from Him. It restores what was lost in Adam's fall—righteousness; it restores what we never could regain but through Christ. It restores hope, spiritual life, and heirship of heaven.

Now, then, if such be Christ's work as a Restorer, who are these that He restores? "He restoreth *my* soul." Oh, how much turns on the word "*my*" in this passage! How different this would read "He restoreth souls," or "everybody's soul"! He restoreth *my* soul. When Spurgeon went down one day into his Orphan House, where he found from day to day the friends of the orphan children sending them money and giving them cake and contributing to their pleasure, one little fellow came up to him and said: "Mr. Spurgeon, suppose you were a poor boy here, and hadn't any uncles, nor aunties, nor sisters, nor friends ever to send you any spending money or candy, or even to remember you through the year? *Because that's me!*" Spurgeon says, "I handed out the silver in my pocket very soon to that lad." "That's me!" If you cannot read of redemption and say, "That's *me!*" I am the needy one; I am the guilty one; the blessing is offered to

me," this gospel is practically to you a mere abstraction. It is when you can put the personal pronoun into your religion and into God's promises and into redeeming love that it becomes to you a power and a joy.

The next point I would present is, that Christ is a Restorer to health. That touches all the diseases of Christians in this congregation. Let me feel your pulse this morning, brother! I am afraid it beats low. There are too many whose pulses beat low. The first inquiry of the physician when he comes in the sick-room is made at the wrist. He always explores the wrist for the pulse. He wants to know how the "regulator" beats. Christ is putting his hand often to thy wrist, brother, to see how the pulse moves—how many strokes to the minute there are. Is it so slow that He shakes His head sadly? How is thy appetite for the Bible? What was thy appetite for prayer last week? What is thy hunger for spiritual blessings? The pulse is one indicator; the appetite is another; the strength of the limbs is another. How nimble art thou, brother, in the path of obedience? How large is thy activity for the Master? All spiritual diseases come from the heart's wandering from God; for the source of the backslider's disease is from the *heart*. Christ can heal that, but He never will until you come to Him and ask Him. Haven't you observed how Christ, when He was upon earth, went hither and thither, according as He was invited or beckoned? Christ goes when He is sent for. If thou longest for the Master's coming to thee to restore thee He will do so, but there must be a prayer on thy part and a deep desire. You have got to desire this, and to lament your backsliding, or you will never be delivered from it. But as soon as you ask Christ's love to come in, and Christ's power to be extended, then you will feel the quickening at once. For another meaning of the text—(and it is the meaning that Albert Barnes gives to it)—is that Christ *re-invigorates the life*. He restores tone and vitality to the blood, imparts strength to the muscles and vigor to the footsteps—a re-invigorating process. That is a very legitimate meaning of the text spiritually—whatever may be the original meaning of it in Hebrew. But you must come back to Christ as the first thing. You must return to Him to be restored to your former condition as a Christian. Do not stop with only the restoration to a former condition. Try after something better than that. This is the mistake with many a backslider. He says, "Oh, if I could only go back where I was! If I could only put myself in the condition I was in ten years ago—or even last year!" That is not the point. It is to get closer to Christ, with a new experience of that love and a new abhorrence of sin and a new diligence in duty; not comparing yourself with a former self, but praying to be better than you ever were

before, even in your very *best* days. That prodigal son could not be restored to his father's love and the vacant seat until he set his footsteps towards home. There was no blessing for him in the "far country." Nothing could possibly be done for him while he was in the swine-yards, or holding in his filthy hands the wretched husks. He was a swinish creature while he was there. First it is "I will arise; I will go"; then restoring love meets him outside the gate and brings him in to the fatted calf, the ring and the table. That parable of the Prodigal Son has a world of sound theology in it. No restoration to the prodigal until he himself comes back, and no recovery to the backslider until he comes to pray for mercy and sets his face towards Christ, and with tears begs to be restored again to the love of Him whom he has betrayed!

I might dwell for a moment (as a third illustration) upon the office of a picture-restorer. He takes an old painting, which might have been quite a masterly production, which may have been a masterpiece of Guido or Correggio or Raphael, and which had been cast aside. The colors had lost their brightness and had grown dim, and the painting seemed to have lost all its comeliness. The restorer sets to work and removes the over-laying dust and accumulation of dirt, and he brings out the colors vividly again—a delicate process, and one by which sometimes a valuable picture starts into new life and beauty. Oh, brother! does not the canvas of thy heart and daily conduct need that kind of restoration? Are not the hues getting dim, the colors losing their brightness? Is not the resemblance to Christ overlaid, and to a great degree hidden out of view so that it is not distinguishable? Oh, if Jesus Christ would come in as a Restorer, bringing out again the lineaments of holiness, there would be a great many of you that would need to "sit to Him!"

The sin of backsliding is an awful sin. It figures so prominently in the Word that, turning to a Bible text-book recently, I was startled almost to see the large number of cases recited, and the maledictions pronounced upon it. Then, too, in studying the narratives of backsliding in the Bible, I discover this, that men often break just where they seemed strongest. For instance, Noah was a Puritan; yet Noah lies on his back drunk. Moses is the synonym of meekness and patience; Moses grows enraged, and smites the rock too often. Solomon is the synonym of wisdom; yet he plays the fool with women and the wine-cup! John is the representative of love; and John it was that asked Christ to bring down a shower of fire on the little Samaritan village! Peter is the brave, heroic disciple; but Peter turns coward at the sneer of a servant-girl. All these men broke right where they thought themselves strong. Christians sometimes do the same thing. Where they think

themselves strong the enemy breaks through. All those men I have spoken of were restored. I hope poor old Solomon was. I think he must have written the book of Ecclesiastes after he was restored. But for this restoration the Master goes out on errands of kindness, as the father sent the man to California to seek his son, almost as one would go to a morgue to see if a certain one was alive or dead! It must have been hard for Christ to go out after such lost, sinning children as He did—but he still does it! He goes straight after them and restores them; and if backsliding is a terrible thing, it is a glorious thing that there is a backsliders' Restorer in Christ Jesus.

Well, to what does Christ restore the backslider when he is penitent and seeks recovery? He restores him to his true place, which was vacant. He restores him to usefulness. The man is ready again for duty, and feels like living a life of some value to himself and to others. He restores to him peace of conscience. No inconsistent church member ever had any peace of conscience. I tell you, young people, you may run away from a prayer-meeting to a ball if you choose; there will be a sting and a prick the next morning when you wake up and think, "Last night I deliberately denied my Lord and Master, and did what He disapproved." When the sound of the revel has died out, another sound—that of conscience—will come in and say, "You know you did wrong, and Christ knows it." Peace of conscience never comes to a man out of the path of duty. Those fallen men that have been lately brought to the tribunal of civil justice had been tried and punished fifty times before in the court of conscience. That was only the external pronouncement from the tribunal which conscience had already brought in a hundred times. There is no peace in wickedness to the wicked-doer, whether he be a church member or not; but peace of conscience comes through pardon and a voluntary return to the place once forsaken. Oh, what joy there is in coming back to health when we have lain a long time on the sick bed, until we pitied our own poor thin fingers and pale lips! The street was strange to us, and our deserted place in the counting-room or at the fireside was like a foreign country. The first time we come out in the air what a tingle it has! and when we meet our friends again for the first time we feel as if just introduced to them. We are restored. Would that every backslider that has come to this church this morning sick, sick, sick, would feel so sick of *himself* that he would put out his hand to Christ and go home again in the first stages of restoration! "Restore unto me the joys of Thy salvation." That is the fourth point I speak of. The restored backslider goes back to his peace of conscience and to his old place of duty, and once more has the joys of salvation. And he has no power for good while in a state of backsliding. He

is of no use while in that state. He not only has no inward peace, but no external influence. The result is that a church full of backsliders is just as inefficient as ten thousand invalids in a campaign. The general may call the muster-roll; he may send orders to "advance"; but if half his men have deserted and the other half are in the hospital, what chance has he in the field? Just so the Master may be calling His people to a life of activity, but if a part have deserted and a part are on their backs in a spiritual decline, there is no response and no out-coming. First of all, there must be restoration. The deserter must come back to his post, and the invalid must stalk out of the hospital; then the army is fit for service. How many deserters are there here this morning? How many that feel the whole head and the whole heart sick with sin? Jesus alone can restore you.

Now, then, I would address a word to those yet unconverted. I have said so much in reference to backsliding members of Christ's Church, because I feel how vital it is that they should realize their need of restoration, and how important that they should be directed to Christ as a Restorer. They should feel also a longing to be restored, which must be bred from deep disgust and dissatisfaction with themselves. If we would direct half the censure which we pass upon the frailty of others towards *our own* weaknesses and besetting sins, and our own cowardice and neglect of duty, you may depend upon it we should be the healthier and the happier. I want to turn you in upon yourselves this morning in the attitude of self-condemnation, that you may be ready to say, "Oh, blessed Jesus, come to-day and recover my soul!" The only hope for every unconverted person here for restoration from the ruin of sin and for recovery from the guilt of sin is in CHRIST. Again and again I proclaim this. If you want to try another method, you will try it to your sorrow. You will come back to it finally; and you may as well start with this idea, that Christ only can forgive your sins; that Christ only can give you power to resist sin; that Christ only can save you. And if you are ever restored, it must be *in this world*. The very word may suggest this idea to you, "May not Christ restore all or any in eternity to heaven? Does not that word have a squinting towards a restoration in eternity?" No! I do not see the faintest grounds for it. A perversion of this text in the direction of that error has, rather more than usual, thrust itself towards the front lately. I know nothing about eternity, and you can know nothing about eternity, but what is revealed in this divine Book. I find the Lord Jesus Christ presented from beginning to end as a Restorer of human souls in this world on the two conditions of repentance and faith. I find not a hint of any restoration from the realm of darkness to the realm

of everlasting glory. Probation is in the fore-front of God's Word for this world. I find no hint of a probationary state in the world to come. If I do not find the doctrine of future probation here, it is of no account to me that any speculative theologian may evolve it out of his own brain. If it is not in God's Word, that is enough. Now, on the other hand, I open this Book and find some very sharply distinct assertions that when death leaves us judgment finds us, and probation is ended. I discover when I look at these pages—(and I think we ought to read them tremblingly as God's loving utterances of warning)—I discover that future punishment is spoken of invariably as *without end*. I am not going to speculate this morning on what it is or what its character is, but it is spoken of in the Word as a penalty laid down upon the transgressor as a banishment from God, as the suffering due to the sinner. It is declared that "the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment"; and there are several other passages of the same solemn purport. Not one of them gives any hint that after the banishment cometh a restoration to final blessedness. Nay, more, I find a direct condemnation of that modern theory in God's Word, where our Saviour drew that most pathetic and powerful picture of the wrath of the world to come, and described Lazarus uplifted into the bosom of the Patriarch Abraham, and the man that had the good things of this world (and grew worse by means of them) crying out in torment. The poor rich man is asking that he may be restored to some small comfort. He puts the doctrine of "restoration" there to practical test; but the answer is, "A great gulf is fixed, so that they who would go from you to us cannot cross." If Jesus Christ knew everything (as He did), He must certainly have known such a tremendous truth as that that "gulf" would yet be *bridged*, and that He was to bridge it! If this Book is so full of salvation for this world, why is there not one line revealing salvation from hell in the world to come? Can it be possible that a doctrine on which thousands hang their hopes of eternity has not a single line here hinting it, when the Bible is so full of rich offers of restoration and salvation in this life?

But imagine a man restored from hell after he had been punished for centuries according to this theory. He is ushered into heaven. They are chanting the song of redemption. He hears them sing, "Worthy of the Lamb that is slain." He has no word of praise for Christ. Jesus has done nothing for him. He has "served out his time" down there, and Satan has been purifying him for hundreds of years, until he has got him in a fit state for heaven. What does that soul owe to Christ? He owes all rather to him who has been putting him through this purifying process in hell, and making him fit for the "better country, even the heavenly."

Charles G. Finney, in one of those tremendous philippics of his against error, used sometimes to describe a "jail delivery" from the world of woe, when a multitude of spirits blasted and blackened came up to the gate of heaven and clamored for admission! The archangel, looking over the gate, inquires, "Who is there? Why is this uproar?" And they reply, "We are from hell! We have *served out our time!* Let us in!" That is the doctrine of restoration! Who here expects to hang his hopes of eternity on that? Who will take the cross of Christ that is put right before him, trample on it in his folly and his madness, and then risk salvation in eternity? Oh, brethren, there is a Restorer *here!* There is a Restorer here! But I know of no restorer beyond the grave.

I sometimes take up and read in that beautiful book of my friend Kennan that description of a scene away off in Kam-schatka, where a portion of their company had been lost in the snow for weeks. He and a few others set out on a journey of two hundred miles to find them. Mr. Kennan tells us that the very feet of the dogs left blood prints on the snow. They pushed on two hundred miles toward the Anadyr River, by the light only of the aurora borealis, hoping to find them. He was seeking to save the lost. He tells us, in an Arctic midnight, when the thermometer was 40 degrees below zero, when they had endeavored to get a little warmth around the fire of a few roots gathered by the way, he heard a sharp halloo across the waste of snow. "We quitted the little fire and hastened in the direction of the sound, and we found one of our guides standing by a little iron pipe thrust out of the snow-bank. I hurried up to it, leaned over it and shouted down that pipe. Listen! Up from beneath the snow I heard, in my familiar native tongue, the words, 'Who's there!' Then," adds Kennan, "when he told us how to find our way into that temporary place in which they were hidden under the snow, and we entered the cavern and saw my companions gathered around the fire in that spot, so near to perishing (where they would have perished if I had not reached them), my nerves had got strung up to such a state of tension during the long journey that in fifteen minutes I was as powerless as a child, and sunk back unable to speak or move." The tide of joy broke him down. There is many a soul whom Jesus has rescued from death, and in his first glimpse of glory he has broken down like my friend Kennan. Why, if you would not think me irreverent, I would say there must be a time when the Lord Jesus Himself would be ready to "break down with joy"! May there be such a breaking in our hearts this morning when we beckon for our loving Lord, until we can exclaim, "Oh, the Restorer is *come!*" Then each one of us can say, "He restoreth my soul! He leadeth me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake." To Him, and to Him alone, be all the glory!

Is Life Worth Living?*

A SERMON

By F. W. Farrar, D.D., CANON OF WESTMINSTER, IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY,
Nov. 4, 1877.

So we Thy people and sheep of Thy pasture will give Thee thanks for ever: we will show forth Thy praise to all generations.—Ps. lxxix: 13.

As the first day of this month was the grand festival of All Saints, so in past centuries the second day of November was set apart in commemoration of All Souls. The motives which led to the abolition of the festival were doubtless adequate; but yet we may well be allowed to regret its abandonment. No doubt, on the whole, there was a certain grandeur, a certain catholicity, a certain triumphant faith, a certain indomitable hope in that ancient commemoration of the departed. It was the feast of All Souls;—there were no exceptions made of all the souls; of all the souls of all the innocent little ones that have passed away like a breath of vernal air since time began; of all the souls which the great and the wise and the noble have sighed for after great and noble lives; of all the souls of all the fishermen in all the seas; of all the souls of all the hunters of the boundless prairies, and of those who have spent their lives amid the ice-flows of the northern seas; of all the souls that have passed weary and heavy-laden from these city streets; of all the souls whose tides have ebbed away in the angry waves; of all those who have passed “unknelled, unconfined and,” save to their God “unknown”; of all the souls made reckless by misery, of those who have rushed unbidden into their Maker’s presence. It was a day of commemoration of all these; because these, too, are all souls which God has made; into these, too, He breathed the breath of life; and all these lie in the hollow of His hand like the water-lilies, whether white and immaculate, or stained and smirched! Yes, there is a thought of sublimity in the thought of *all human souls*; and a day might have been set apart in humble reverence and commemoration of their immortality. Our finite imagination might grow dizzy at the thought of this infinite multitude of human souls who at each ticking of the clock pass away from the land of the living; and all the tribes of all the centuries, the millenniums of the past, are but the leaves, green or fallen, on the tree of existence; the wave after wave of its illimitable tide!

* This sermon is the one alluded to by Canon Farrar in his sermon on *Endless Punishment*, which we published in our January number, and belongs to the series.—ED.]

When we think of these we recall the language of the poet of the "Inferno," and seem to be gazing on the wild, rushing tide of life, sweeping on to an horizon of infinite extent—infinite, multitudinous and innumerable as the motes which people the sunbeam! All calculation is lost. Human calculation reels at it; but it is not so with Him to whom is known the number of the stars of heaven and the sands of the sea, and by whom every leaf in every nook, every wave in every brook, is heard as they sing forth their unending pæan all the day long!

And knowing this we are not appalled at the thought of those vast multitudes—"multitudes in the Valley of Decision"—whose days are now in the bosom of the solid earth; and though they have passed away we can say with the Psalmist of Israel—"Oh, let the sighing of the prisoners come before Thee; according to Thy power preserve Thou those that are appointed to die. So we that are Thy people and sheep of Thy pasture shall give Thee thanks for ever and will always be shewing forth Thy praise from generation to generation."

But if we cannot say this at all, how does life appear to us then? There are many who have lost their faith in God; my brethren, it is not for us to judge them or to blame them. Nay, we most heartily pity them; not, believe me, with any supercilious sense of superiority, not with any pharisaic taint of pride, but for their own sakes, and in sincere and humble brotherhood of sympathy. Even if they reject and despise such sympathy, yet, knowing how terrible, how irreparable would be the loss of such faith to us, we pity them, and pray that they no less than we may be folded at last in the arms of God's infinite mercy, and led at last into the radiance of His eternal light! Oh, seeing that the faith of their childhood and of their fathers has suffered shipwreck; seeing that they think, or think that they think, that there is no God, and that we die as the beasts of the field—can we then wonder that they ask themselves whether life be at all worth living? Nay, we are glad that they should face such questions; because the deeper their bark sinks, the more sure are we that they must come at last to that bed on which the ocean rests—that God, whose offspring we are, and "in whom," whether we deny Him or whether we believe in Him, we all "live, and move, and have our being."

But since the question is now being deliberately discussed, *Is life worth living?* we are not, as Christians, to pass it quite lightly and thoughtlessly by without consideration. It is not desirable that we should separate the pulpit from the thoughts of the week-day world, or avoid the questions which men who scorn religion discuss among themselves. I do not believe, my brethren, in the faith which can only be maintained by fall-

ing back upon an isolated clericalism, I desire that the creed of a Christian should be a manly creed, which need not be shirked or spoken with bated breath. I desire that our faith should be no mere exotic, covered with a glass lest the winds of heaven should visit it too roughly; but rather it should be like the green blade of corn, on which the rain may descend, and the snows lie, and the scorching sun shine, and the winds blow, but which, because God's sun does shine on it, and as a result of that, has a vital power; then, not in spite of, but because of these influences, should still grow up to the tiny blade, the tender ear, and to the rich, ripened corn.

Is this life worth living? life, I mean, regarded by itself; life on this earth, life apart from God; life—your life, my life, human life in general—considered under its purely earthly aspects and relationships? Let us, it must be inadequately, it may be mistakenly, it must be quite superficially, yet let us, with perfect honesty, glance at this this afternoon. And let us in nowise exaggerate; let no personal circumstances, let no melancholy temperament, no pressure of immediate passing trials bias our verdict. Let us, so far as we may, look at it steadily, and look at it as a whole.

It is not all darkness; it has its crimson glows and its golden sunsets. It is not all clouds; and even those we have have their silver linings. It is not all winter; it has its summer days on which it is a luxury to breathe the breath of life. Life has its May when all is glorious. Then the words are vocal, the winds breathe music, the very breeze has mirth in it. Ask the little child, with its round cheeks, and its bright eyes, and its flaxen curls, with the tender love and care which enfold and encircle it, and smooth its path the whole day long. Ask the happy boy, tingling with joy to the finger tips as he roams through the fields, in generous friendships, in strong health, in freedom from all cares, in the confidence of all happiness, with his will as free as the wind's will, when all the days are long! Ask happy lovers, when all the days are bright, and they are all in all to each other, and in their gaze a lovelier emerald tinges the grass! Ask brave soldiers on the field of victory; ask some of the great thinkers when some new truth dawns upon them; ask the father and the mother when cares do not press, and the little ones are gone to bed, and they sit together by the fireside quietly the evening through; and at such times perhaps they will all be ready to answer that life *is* worth living; and though darkness comes alike to all, yet we all have such periods—call them intervals, at least—between storm and storm, interspaces of sunlight between the breadths of the gloom, until over every one of us the night at last sweeps down!

Yes, my brethren, let us acknowledge, let us cherish, let us

be grateful for, let us, as far as we may, without selfishness, multiply these natural pleasures, these innocent and simple and holy joys! Let us admit, too, that God is very, very good to us; and that the lesser evils of our lives are often only in anticipation, or of our own making, not of God's. The Christian is no pessimist, to encourage in himself a view of life needlessly discouraging; no ascetic, thinking that God cares for pain and sorrow for sorrow's sake; no optimist, dwelling in the groves of myrtle. Yet, if I ask if these colored threads are strong enough to weave the warp or the woof of life, I think I know what your answer must be.

Let us grant that childhood, keen as are its little trials, can hardly be otherwise than happy, and that its tears are dried as soon as the dew upon the rose. Let us grant that boyhood—although St. Augustine says that the boy's sufferings, while they last, are as keen as those of men are—is happier, happier certainly since the day when Arnold purified and ennobled the schools of England; since the days when Shelley loathed and scorned the treatment he received at Eton; or the gentle Cowper dwelt here at Westminster.

And sometimes also life—life has saddest memories, and we are too often forgetful of the inevitable incongruity between fruit and seed; and when swiftly and imperceptibly boyhood passes into youth, and youth merges into the manhood which is upon us, and the golden gates close silently behind us, and we step forth into the thorny wilderness; when the splendid vision has faded into the white light of noon-day; when the brilliant ideals and the enthusiasms of communities have been smirched and dimmed; when not one single ray of enchantment rests for one instant over the black hills and the barren path of life—and we are men, yea, we are men who must work, and beside us are the women who must weep—brothers, how is it with us then?

I will not take any of the great crimes of life as they are sometimes revealed to us when the light of day falls for us upon some suburban villa or small farm. Clergymen especially know these are too common; and I feel there are some here on whose bosom is lying like lead the awful burden of some undiscovered sin. Still I will not take these great crimes into account, for sin tries to creep upon us all, silent and tragic and stealthy as a serpent's sting, or to bound upon us with irresistible force with a tiger's leap; and although there must be some here who have been struck with that poison or seized by that tiger leap, I will not take the case of one sunk into shame unutterable, who has come to a felon's end; or that one who has lived honorably before men but has been tempted by fatal men to take crooked ways, and comes to plead with tremulous voice against a sentence which, to him, is the agony of death!

I will not take the too common case of a man who wakes to the consciousness that he is under the fatal spell of drunkenness or any other such sin. Which of us can say he is quite safe from such sin as this? I will not take those great crimes or the great tragedies of life. Who has not known a case in which a man has been suddenly beaten down to earth, bruised and beaten under the shock of some wholly inexplicable and quite intolerable catastrophe? Who has not seen—certainly I have—families bright and happy, but their whole happiness shattered, aye, in a moment, by the crash of doom? Who shall say, “I am safe from such ruin as this”?

But I will only take the common cases of life—its daily fevers, its necessary trials. Our sorrows are quite different sorrows; but which of us all here, be he rich or poor, be he noble or insignificant, be he senator or shop-boy, is exempt from them? Take pain; is there one of us here who has not known the throbbing head, the aching nerve, the sleepless night? Take health; are there not some here who rarely know what perfect health is? Take reputation; have you not been in anguish when cruel and untrue things have been said of you, and not the less cruel and none the less painful if true? Take households; is there no household whose “graves are scattered far and wide”? Is there no father who has seen the dust sprinkled over the head of his bright, happy child? Is there no mother who has seen the rose of her family suddenly wither and fade from view? Is there no father whose life has been darkened at a stroke? No man whose friends have been taken from him in a moment, and their loss marked by gravestones? No parents whose sons wrung their hearts by folly and ingratitude, or who have, in some far land, a prodigal who will come home no more? And of all the hundreds who are listening to the voice of a weak fellow-sinner like thyself, are there not some, perhaps a great many, whose lives seem to dwindle as life goes on, on whom no morning dawns but it dawns with heavy cares as they think with a sigh of the dreary routine before them, of the insufficient means, of the debts which hang like a mill-stone round their necks, of the chill burden of poverty? And are there not some who are looking forward almost with agony for the day of death—not for themselves at all, but because they think how they must leave their dear ones, left sorrowful, and little sons and daughters unprotected and unprovided for, left to the cold pity and grudging charity of a frosty world? Indeed, many of us could say with the poet by the seashore:

“Alas, I have no hope, no rest, nor peace within,
Nor calm of mind, nor passing health, nor contemplation kind!
To me that cup hath been dealt in far other measure.”

Ah! my brethren, I have not time to say anything like the

worst. A man may bear up bravely—he may be a man—against sorrow; he may think it no great matter whether he be happy or unhappy; and if life be bitter and not sweet, he may find it still to be borne; and if he be a true Christian he may say, “I have received the cross; I have received it at Thy hands, and I will bear it even to the death.” But when to these sorrows sin is added; when calamity meets an accusing conscience; when a man has a sense of wasted opportunities, the shame of forsaken ideals, the sting of evil memories, the plague of polluted and polluting thoughts; when he knows and feels at the best that in this or that act or phase of his life he was unloving, or ignoble, or uncandid, and not what he ought to have been, not what God would have had him be—is there no sorrow or anguish in thoughts like these apart from all deeper and darker errors? A sense of duties unfulfilled, of days and opportunities unused, of affections trifled with, of light turned to darkness! Oh! when with our souls “the treacherous dealers deal very treacherously”—and we have been the most treacherous dealers to ourselves—does life seem worth living then, or must we not all say,

“Alas for earth, if this were all,
And nought beyond, O earth!”

So, then, when I look at life I say,

“Lead, lead me on, my hopes!”

But if you ask me whether life without God in the world and no hope beyond the grave is worth living, I answer, “No;” and not I only, but all the best and wisest of mankind. Ask all the kings and queens; ask all the poets and scholars; ask all the warriors and statesmen whose dust you are treading upon. Was Elizabeth, was Spencer, was Chatham, was even Newton, happy? Over the volumes of human history is written “Vanity of vanities!” and the knell of lamentation, mourning and woe; and the very Scriptures are the record of human sorrow.

I am well aware that there are those who would rob us of our human hopes; who would take our Lord out of the sepulchre and not tell us where they had laid Him; who would change our God into a stream of perplexing tendencies; who would turn our God into an empty face with no eye-socket, from which no eye of love and mercy ever beamed over us. But if they want to take our fine gold from us we do not want their dross or tinfoil in its place; nor for diamonds will we take imitations in glass and paste! We, some of us, will cling to duty though it be lost of sanctions, and to virtue though she have lost her oracle; but we do not need sham gods or mock eternities. And as for the world, if Atheism reign, it will go on its way picking and stealing, chambering and slandering, till the pit swallow it up! This is what is openly proclaimed by the

German corypheus of atheism, by the extinction, the annihilation of the human race!

But (if you will listen to me for one moment more) how, when touched by one ray out of God's Eternity, does this grotto of icicles in the Valley of the Shadow of Death melt into mud and nothingness! How does this glaring figure of the Colossus with the head of Atheism crumble into impotence when struck by the stone of Divine Truth! If there be no God, no heavens unseen; if there be no atonement for intolerable wrongs; if praying nations lift up their hands in vain; if hollow echoes are all the answer which follows Christ's words upon the cross, then life is a make-believe which nothing can save from intolerable weariness. But let but one sound from God's voice thrill through the deafened ears; let but one ray flash upon the blinded eyes, one hand hold to us one green and healing leaf from the Tree of Life, and how all is changed! How can we then thank God "for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life"! How can we then say, with bursts of exultation, "Thou, O God, art our Father, our Saviour, our great and merciful God; and we that are Thy people, and the sheep of Thy pasture, shall give Thee thanks forever;" so that, if our thoughts have come to us this afternoon clothed in a cloud, let them depart encircled with a rainbow! That rainbow may seem but a watery thing, but still it is sufficient in this life to arch the spray of the cataract and to shine upon the menace of the storm! Sorrows? We shall all have sorrows; but if we exercise due faith we shall find them but mercies in disguise. Sins? Ah! yes; we have all committed sins, and shall fall into them again. But we have a Saviour; and if we trust in Him and seek Him, they shall be forgiven and cast away!

Is life worth living? Ask the Atheist; and if he tells you his real thought, that thought will be the one of the English poet:

"Count all the joys that thou hast seen;
Count all the tears from anguish keen;
And know, whatever thou hast seen,
'Twere better never to have been;"

or, with the Greek poet, that the best thing of all is not to have been born; and the next best thing, to pass away as soon as possible! But ask the Christian, and he will say, "Yes, life is infinitely worth living, and death is even infinitely more worth dying; for 'For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.' To live is to have faith in God here; and to die is to be with Him forever hereafter! Death is the veil which they who live call life; we sleep and it is lifted!"

The Resurrection an Essential Fact of the Gospel.

A SERMON

By H. P. Liddon, D.D. (CANON OF ST. PAUL'S LONDON).

If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.—1 Corinthians xv: 14.

Last Sunday we were looking at the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the garden of the sepulchre, and with the eyes of St. Mary Magdalene. The first lesson of the morning service of to-day carries us at a bound over a quarter of a century, to listen to discussions about the resurrection in one of the active centres of Greek life and thought. The text takes us to the Christian schools of Corinth, and St. Paul is pointing out to some ready but not very far-sighted disputants the consequence of their denying the Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. "How say some among you," he asks, "that there is no resurrection of the dead?" To deny this doctrine in the block, so the apostle argues, is to deny that Christ himself has risen, and, if he has really risen from the grave, it is impossible to say absolutely that there is no such thing as a resurrection of the dead, since here we have a representative instance of it. There were, it would appear, at Corinth some who did not shrink from encountering this argument by denying that even Christ our Lord Himself had really risen, and to these persons the apostle points out that, however unconsciously, they were, in point of fact, giving up Christianity altogether. If Christ was still in His tomb, the errand of the apostles to the world, and the obedience of the faithful to the doctrine which the apostles preached, were equally based upon a vast delusion. "If Christ be not risen, our preaching is vain; your faith is also vain."

It is pretty certain that the persons with whom St. Paul is arguing this matter were not converts from Judaism to the faith of Jesus Christ. A religious Jew, a Pharisee—whatever may be said of those Jewish free-thinkers the Sadducees—had no difficulty whatever in professing his belief that the dead would rise. He had believed it before his conversion. How strong, how clear, this Jewish faith was in a Jew before the coming of our divine Lord we see from the account of the martyrdoms in the Book of the Maccabees. Those pious Jews died under the hand of the Macedonian persecutor, firmly believing that they would rise again. And when St. Paul was arrested in Jerusalem and placed before the Sanhedrim, he

knew how to strike the chord which would at once enlist the sympathies of a good half of his hearers. "Men and brethren," he cried, "I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question." And the appeal was successful. "The scribes that were of the Pharisees' part arose and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man; but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God." On the other hand, to the pagan Greek the idea of a coming resurrection of the dead was not merely novel—it was unwelcome; it was opposed to the current Greek conceptions about the condition and the destiny of the dead. It would have seemed to a Greek a materialistic way of stating the very shadowy possibilities, which alone presented themselves to his mind, of any future existence. So palpable, so literal an assertion that man would live once more an un mutilated life, with body as well as spirit hereafter, would have repelled the Greek, since the immortality of the soul itself, although an original truth of what we call natural religion, appears in Greek literature only as a fugitive speculation, however elegant and pathetic its rendering at times undoubtedly is.

The resurrection of man's body lay altogether beyond the frontier of customary Greek habits of thinking. When St. Paul began to preach the resurrection at Athens his hearers missed his true meaning so entirely as to suppose that the word which expressed it was the name of a new deity. "He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods," they said; and this because he preached unto them Jesus Christ and the resurrection. And these deeply-rooted prejudices were carried by converts from Greek paganism into the Church of Christ, and they contributed largely to form the systems of error which took definite forms in the second century after Christ, and which are collectively described as gnostic. Ten years after, writing to the Corinthians, St. Paul mentions to his pupil, Timothy, two Greek teachers at Ephesus, Hymeneus and Philetus, "who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is passed already." These persons would seem to have wished, on the one hand, to keep to the language of the apostolic Church, but, on the other, to get rid of its meaning and substance. They accepted a resurrection, but only a resurrection in the past—not a resurrection in the future—only a moral resurrection of the soul, not a literal resurrection of the body. This, you observe, was the Greek feeling, still in rebellion against the faith, but not now wishing to come to an open rupture, and so attempting a sort of explanation which might hold on to the terms of a Christian profession, and, at the same time, rejecting realities which those terms were meant to convey.

Now, in Corinth we see the same sort of feeling at work,

but then the Corinthians were recent converts, and they did not all of them know what rebellion from God meant and involved. They thought that it was something like one of their own philosophies—something to be reviewed, discussed, partly accepted, partly rejected, quite at their pleasure. There was much in Christianity that they liked, and that they accepted without difficulty—nay, with enthusiasm; but the resurrection of the dead, some of them, at any rate, could not tolerate. They asked in sharp, contemptuous scorn, "How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come?" as if such questions had only to be raised in order to show a sensible people how absurd it was to expect an answer. Their difficulties about the resurrection arose partly out of their physical speculations—out of their theories about the universe—out of their ideas as to the nature and the destiny of being, but they did not imagine that in denying the resurrection of the dead they were breaking with essential Christianity, or doing anything more or worse than rejecting a crude dogma of Jewish origin.

This was the state of mind with which St. Paul is dealing in the text, and his first object is to oblige his readers to understand what their words really come to. In all matters, to some extent—in religious matters especially—people use language without weighing its meaning—without asking themselves how much it involves and whither it will carry them. The Corinthians who denied the resurrection of the dead would like to have confined themselves, no doubt, to discussing the presumed physical impossibility of anything of the sort. But St. Paul cuts them short by saying, "If you mean what you say, you do mean that Christ Himself never really rose." Some of the Corinthians were prepared, it would seem, to accept the consequence; but then they did not see why they could not deny even the resurrection of Jesus Christ and yet continue somehow to be Christians. They did not wish in terms to give up Christianity. They flattered themselves that they still retained a firm hold upon all that was really essential in it—that they had only given up legendary additions to the simple story of the life of Christ—additions which their Greek science had pronounced impossible. They were still willing to believe in a Christ who displayed before the eyes of men a perfect moral example—who did many works of love, if not works of wonder—who taught a doctrine which they recognized as heavenly—who died a cruel and a shameful death. But that, being dead and buried, He rose again the third day according to the Scripture—this they deemed a superstitious apostolic addition to the simple truth. It was no part of that particular fragment of Christianity which approved itself to their order of intelligence as really fundamental, and so they rejected it without

any kind of hesitation. It is to these persons that St. Paul says solemnly, "If Christ be not risen, our preaching is vain; and your faith is also vain." St. Paul, you see, will not allow that this faith in a Christ who has never risen from his grave is any Christianity at all. According to him, if it is a religion at all, it is another religion; it has nothing to do with the faith which is preached by the apostles. These Corinthians might still talk about our Lord Jesus Christ; they might still claim the honors and the risks of the Christian name; they might even imagine that they differed only from the apostles in being more clear-sighted and better informed without being less tender-hearted and less devout. But St. Paul will allow nothing of the kind. He did not let *them*—that is, his motive—did not let them deceive themselves in a matter of such momentous import. To deny Christ's resurrection is to abandon Christianity outright; it is to give up the core and heart of the faith. The beliefs that still remain may have an interest of their own, but it is the interest which is inspired by a corpse—which may, indeed, recall the past, but which has no longer its place in the land of the living.

"Why," it may be asked, "why should this be the case? Why cannot a man still be a Christian believer who rejects the resurrection of Jesus Christ? How is it that the rejection of this truth can make the faith which still clings to much else, but denies this particular doctrine, vain or empty?" The answer is, "Because the resurrection of Christ is the foundation-fact upon which the Christian creed rests in an intelligent and believing soul." If any one of the apostles had been asked how it was that they knew that Jesus Christ was the promised Messiah—the eternal Son of God—the Saviour of the world—by whose teaching and example mankind were to be enlightened—by whose blood men were to be redeemed—to whom all the children of men were bound to pay the homage of their obedience and their love—the answer would have been, "Because Jesus Christ rose from the dead." Read through those sermons, when you go home, which are reported at the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles, and observe how one after another they base the claim of Jesus Christ to love and obedience upon the fact of the resurrection—the fact to which the apostles themselves, while they were preaching, bore a personal witness. In the eyes of the apostles the resurrection of Jesus was God's visible interference designed to certify the true mission and the true claims of Jesus. Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself had appealed beforehand to this very certificate. The sign which He had given to an unbelieving generation—the proof that He came from God—was that He would raise the temple of His body from the dead in three days, and, therefore, the apostles began with preaching this

fact of the resurrection. They virtually said to their hearers, "You see He has been as good as His word. He has risen from the dead; therefore let us believe in Him." And thus, as St. Paul observed, He was proclaimed to be the Son of God, with power according to His holy, divine nature by the resurrection from the dead.

But the resurrection does not merely, as the apostles handle it, light up the past. It is an earnest of the future: it is the warrant that He who rose will come to judge us. When St. Paul has told the Athenians that God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained, He naturally reflects that a critical and skeptical audience will ask what proof there is to be alleged in favor of so startling an announcement. Accordingly he adds, "Of this God has given assurance unto all men in that He has raised Jesus from the dead." The apostles, in preaching the faith, are like those architects who make a stone roof of wide area depend for its support upon a central pillar. They know that the pillar is strong enough for its work. They were themselves appointed to be witnesses of the resurrection. They never met the world without bearing their testimony. They knew that, if the resurrection was sincerely believed, all else in the Christian creed would hold good. They knew also that if the resurrection of Christ was rejected, nothing else could be, in the long run, received at all.

Suppose, for instance, that one of these Corinthian disputants had said, "I do not want to believe in Christ's resurrection, but I do not wish to reject the benefits of His death." The apostle would have asked, "What benefits do you mean? What becomes of the death of Christ if it was not followed by His resurrection?" It at once descends to the level of a purely human event. It is in no way more remarkable than the death of any other high-minded and disinterested man for a cause to which he is attached. It may have—it undoubtedly still has—the importance of a high moral example of devotion to truth, to charity, to justice, but the language which the apostles use about it, and which Christendom has ever believed, becomes at once unmeaning. Why should the death of a mere man whose body has mouldered in his grave be a power on earth and in heaven, mighty to cleanse from guilt and to secure divine pardon? St. Paul's bones rest somewhere in, or near, the great city where they slew him some thirty-five years after his Master's death, but who could speak of Paul as dying for his followers, or for the ungodly—as bearing their sins in his own body—as being set forth as a propitiation through faith in his blood? Who would dare to say that Christians are reconciled to God by the death of St. Paul, or that by him they had received the atonement, or that Paul is

a propitiation for their sins, and not for theirs only, but also for the sins of the whole world, or that Paul gave himself a ransom for all? Every Christian believer feels the shocking profanity of applying this language to any other than the divine Redeemer. But why, I ask, is it so profane? Because it is the divine person of Christ who died on Calvary which gives such meaning to His atoning death. "Ye were not redeemed," exclaims St. Peter, "with corruptible things as silver and gold"—(he might have added, "or with the blood of a merely human victim")—"but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and immaculate." "If God," argues St. Paul, "spared not His own Son, but freely gave Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" But, then, how do we know that the sufferer on Calvary was God's own Son. The answer is, "By the resurrection." The resurrection, if I may dare so to speak, put the death of Jesus Christ before the world in its true light. It was an immense reversal of the *primâ facie* appearances of the event. What had looked like a defeat was soon to be a triumph. What seemed the execution of a condemned criminal was recognized as an awful transaction having immense results on earth and in heaven throughout all time. If Christ was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God. This was the key-note of the apostolic teaching. The resurrection had lifted His death to a higher, or, rather, to an altogether different level from that of any human sufferer. But then, if the resurrection is denied, all the apostolic language about the atonement becomes a tissue of mystical exaggerations, which, as applied to the death of a mere man, are worse than unintelligible. This consequence the Corinthians might not have seen at once, but, at any rate, their faith in the atonement was already undermined by their disbelief in the resurrection of the crucified Christ.

But suppose the Corinthian objector to say, "Very well, we will give up the atonement, but we will continue to believe in the beauty of Christ's language and example. This, after all, is, in our opinion, the really essential thing in Christianity. The rest may go, and we shall not, perhaps, be the worse for losing it." Here St. Paul would have explained that in order to recognize the beauty of Christ's language and example there was no necessity for faith, properly so called, at all. Faith is an acceptance of the unseen upon sufficient testimony. Faith is an effort of some sort: it is a venture. Its proper object is a something which does not lie within the range of experience. You and I do not need faith or anything but ordinary judgment and common moral sense in order to do justice to the good sayings and good actions of any one among the many excellent people who may be named as hav-

ing died some twenty or thirty years ago. We knew enough about them on very good evidence to enable us to give full play to our admiration: we admire them accordingly. It would be absurd to call them objects of faith. This is what St. Paul would have said—that faith, which is an instrument of the soul's spiritual life, is not wanted for any such purpose as the Corinthian objectors might have pleaded. But might he not, would he not, have gone a step farther? Must he not have pointed out that to deny the resurrection and, at the same time, to profess to admire the words of Christ, or the example of Christ, was really impossible. Did not our Lord, more than once, when challenged for a sign or warrant of His claims, say that He would be put to death and rise again the third day? Remark—the third day. There is a precision in the announcement which forbids figurative interpretation of the language, as if, forsooth, such language could be satisfied by the remote triumph of Christ's name or doctrine while His body mouldered in the grave. No, it is impossible to admire some of His best attested words if His resurrection be denied. Let me add, it is impossible to admire His example. Upon what kind of ground can we explain, or justify, His inviting the love and trust and homage of all those pious and tender souls who thronged around Him, if, in reality, He was no more than one of themselves—if He had not in Himself some source and supply of strength which was more than human? "We preach not ourselves," says His apostle. But *He*, the Master, says, "*I* am the way, the truth, and the life. Come unto *Me*, all ye that are weary and heavy-laden. *I* am the light of the world. *I* am the true vine. *I* am the good Shepherd. All that ever came before *Me* are thieves and robbers." The constant reiterated self-assertion of Jesus Christ in the face of His own precepts about the beauty of being humble and self-forgetting and retiring is to be explained by the inward necessity laid upon Him by His consciousness of His divine personality of which His resurrection was the visible witness to the world. Deny His resurrection, and His character, as we have it in the gospels, requires nothing less than reconstruction, if it is not to be met by the moral sense of men with some very different judgment indeed from that of sympathy and admiration.

These, then, are some of the grounds on which St. Paul would have maintained that if Christ be not risen, the faith of Christians is vain.

But observe the character of his argument—an argument from the consequences of rejecting the resurrection. Elsewhere he proves the resurrection directly. It may be inferred, not merely from the words of Jesus—from the language of prophecy—but especially, and above all, from the actual experience of eye-witnesses who might be counted by hundreds,

and many of whom were living when the apostle wrote. Here St. Paul says: "See what will happen if you reject Christ's resurrection. You will have to give up Christianity altogether. If Christ be not risen, our preaching is vain; your faith is also vain. You Corinthians are in a dilemma. You must go forward or you must go back. You must either believe with us apostles in the resurrection of Christ and in the resurrection of the dead, which is its consequence, or you must fall back into the darkness from which you emerged at your conversion." This is a kind of argument which, if it were not being handled by an inspired apostle, we should describe as trenchant. Plainly it is intended to cut discussion short—to bring matters to an issue by a short and easy method. St. Paul feels that something must be said which will not be forgotten. He feels as he felt when he told the Galatians, "If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing"; or, "If we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached, let Him be accursed"; or when He said to the Corinthians, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha." It was in the same state of mind—with the same general intention, namely, of rousing dull minds by some vivid expressions to see how matters really stood—that he wrote, "If Christ be not raised, our preaching is vain; your faith is also vain."

It may be said—it has been said—that arguments of this kind are inconsiderate and unsuccessful—first, that they crush out with their relentless logic the still surviving faith of weak but inconsequent believers—that they forget the divine injunction about not quenching the smoking flax or breaking the bruised reed; and, secondly, that they do not always succeed—that they rouse opposition, almost resentment—among persons of independence of character, who, because independent of character, are not therefore hostile to religion; that in some cases they entirely defeat the object with which they are used, as of the alternatives presented the one is taken which is really designed to enforce the other. The lever breaks in the workman's hand just as it is being applied.

And this, it must be granted, is true enough of the employment of such arguments in a great many places among ourselves. No doubt there are writers and talkers who take pleasure in forcing people, as they say, to be logical and consistent. Whatever may be the sort of consistency that is enforced, these writers and talkers are like a reckless man riding at full tilt down a street full of children at play: they are thinking only of their own feat and prowess—nothing of the consequences. Often, indeed, we must know—some of us—that the employment of such intellectual weapons is very cruel. They leave wounds and doubts in tender minds which are healed only

slowly, or never healed at all. They may be very fine feats of reason, but, like the sports of ancient kings, they are indulged at the cost of the defenceless and the weak. Too seldom, indeed, do many speakers and writers, in private and in public, track out the effect of their reckless words in the shattered hopes, in the distressed consciences, in the weakened resolves, which are really caused by them. But granting all this, it does not by any means follow that arguments like that of St. Paul—"You must believe more than you do or you certainly will cease to be a Christian"—are not sometimes necessary, aye, charitable. They are like those critical operations in surgery which no man would undertake or undergo without adequate necessity, but which are sometimes necessary to saving life. Everything depends upon the spirit in which—upon the purpose with which—an argument like this is used. It may be used as a vain display of personal power—as a means of achieving intellectual victory. In this case nothing can well be more criminal. It may be used in a spirit of true charity in order to save a soul which has got into a dreamland, and which mistakes the picture formed in its own fancy for the eternal truths. In this case nothing can be more charitable. The knife may be employed by a scientific surgeon to save a patient's life by a timely operation, or by a bungler who is thinking of his professional reputation, or by a burglar to cut a man's throat. St. Paul, who watched with such tender solicitude over the scruples of the weak brethren in Rome and in Corinth, would never have forced his hearers or readers to choose between the acceptance of one particular doctrine and the rejection of the Christian faith, except under the pressure of the sternest necessity. He, we may be certain, had fully counted the risks. He knew what the effect would be on those whom he addressed. He would never have placed them in the dilemma unless he had been satisfied that they loved their faith better than their speculations—that they would accept the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ when they found that to reject it was to reject Christianity. A serious logical operation was needed. The apostle knew that the patient could bear it.

In conclusion, there are two practical considerations to be carried away.

First, brethren, reflect how dangerous it is to pick and to choose in the things of God. It is not too much to say that some persons who would be distressed at the idea that they are bad Christians have no adequate notion at all of the truth that the Christian revelation, if accepted at all, must be accepted as a whole. They believe and think as if, in approaching the truths which God has set before us through his blessed Son and in His Word, they were, like intending purchasers entering a shop, perfectly at liberty to choose whatever might

strike their taste and fancy, and to reject the rest. The question of believing or of rejecting belief appears to them to be a matter to be decided mainly by personal bias or inclination, although, of course, it is in reality as unreasonable to do this as it is irreverent. "Unreasonable," I say, because all really revealed truth rests exactly on the same ground, and recommends itself equally to a perfectly balanced mind; and irreverent because to reject any part of revelations is, virtually, to tell the divine Revealer that He has set before the mind of His creature that which is either unmeaning or incredible. At the same time it is true that some truths may be rejected with less ruin to the entire fabric of faith than many others, just as certain limbs of the human body may be amputated without destroying life, although they impair its perfectness, while others—the head, for example—cannot be parted with without instant death. Thus two mistakes may be made about the doctrine of grace—about the meaning of large portions of Scripture—without necessarily leading to fatal consequences; but to reject the resurrection is to cut at the very root of Christian belief; it is to cease, as far as thought and feeling go, to be a Christian. A Christ who never rose from His grave is not the Christ of the Bible—not the Christ of Christendom. Such a Christ has nothing in common with our divine Saviour but the name.

And, secondly and lastly, ask yourselves, each one, "What does the resurrection of Jesus Christ mean to me? How much of my life, of my thought, of my resolve day by day, is influenced by it?" Put to yourselves the supposition—for a Christian, the dreadful, the impossible supposition—that the resurrection should be shown to be untrue. What would you have lost? Try to estimate the difference in your thoughts and lives which the loss of this truth would involve? We know what the death of such and such a relation would mean to us. We can calculate almost the exact effect by thinking over our habits of life throughout one day. We know what the reduction of our means of living to such and such a sum would involve—in the loss of comforts—in the means of doing good. What then would be the effect upon us of the withdrawal—if we could conceive it possible—of the doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the creed and from the Bible? How would it touch our hold of the other Christian truths? How would it change our thoughts about the future—about the dead—about the world unseen—about our own death, and all that will follow it? How would it touch our thoughts and feelings throughout the day as, if we are Christians, they move around the person of our unseen but never absent Lord and Saviour? If we get this question honestly answered, we may form a tolerably fair estimate of the value of our faith in Christ's resurrection at this moment. If we do indeed believe that He has risen, that stu-

pendous faith does and must mould thought, feeling, resolve in all kinds of ways. If we do believe that He is risen and living, then we know that to part with this faith would be to the life of our spirits what, if the thing were possible, the extinction of the sun's light and warmth in the heavens would be to all beings that grow and breathe upon the surface of the earth.

If Jesus Christ risen is indeed the object of our faith, then our religion is not merely the critical study of an ancient sacred literature; it is a vitally distinct thing from that. It is the communion of our spirits with a divine and everlasting being. It is faith in the resurrection which marks our present relations to Jesus Christ as something altogether different from those which we have to the famous dead who have in past years filled the thoughts and governed the history of mankind. At the beginning of this century—(it is natural to remember it within these walls)—Nelson and Wellington were names second to none among those who claimed the attention of the world. Where are they now? Their dust moulders beneath your feet. Where are they now? Their disembodied spirits are waiting, we know not exactly where, for the hour of the judgment. But where is Jesus Christ? He, risen from his grave—arrayed in His glorious manhood—is seated on the throne of heaven. He is the mid-point—the centre of the great empire of living souls. He is in communication, constant and intimate, with myriads of beings to whom, by His death, and by His triumph over death, and by His enduring and exhaustless life, He is made wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. Yes, to believe in the risen Jesus is to live beneath a sky which is indeed bright. This is to believe that He is alive for evermore, and that He has the keys of hell and of death.

A Word in Season to Him that is Weary.

A SERMON

PREACHED IN THE CITY TEMPLE, LONDON, SUNDAY EVENING, NOV. 25TH,
1877, BY Rev. Joseph Parker, D.D.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Almighty God; it is our joy to know that Thou givest power to the faint, and to them that have no might Thou dost increase strength; the bruised reed Thou wilt not break, smoking flax Thou wilt not quench. Thou dost gather the lambs in thine arms and gently lead them that are with young. Thou art patient and gentle beyond all motherliness, and as for Thy love, it hath no measure; it is as Thy mercy, enduring forever, and all mankind shall speak of Thy goodness when the world is enlightened with Thy glory. Thou dost wait for us on the hard road; Thou dost not chide us beyond our strength; Thou dost tarry and linger long like a good shepherd waiting for the flock that cannot move quickly. This have we known ourselves and it is no mystery to us, for every day Thou dost nourish us and cherish us and wait for us and expend upon us the love that redeemed the universe. Thou art so mighty and yet so gentle. The voice of the Lord is powerful; Thy voice divideth the flames of fire, and yet it is a still small voice, finding out with infinite tenderness the broken heart, the wounded spirit, the weary pilgrim, and speaking music to those that have no hope. Thy voice indeed is like the voice of many waters: when Thou dost speak in Thy Judgment Thou dost make the cedars of Lebanon skip like lambs, yea Lebanon and Sirion like young unicorns. Still Thy voice is tender and gentle—Thou dost attemper the wind to the shorn lamb; though Thy mighty tones divide all the thickets of Kadesh, yet doth the Lord give strength unto His people and bless His saints with peace.

Is it not in Thy power alone to give peace? What have we but a truce in the midst of war if we have not Thy will wrought in us as it is wrought in Thy host above? Thine is an unspeakable peace, a peace which passeth understanding; not as the world giveth dost Thou give unto Thy children when Thou dost breathe upon them the benediction of peace. Great peace have they that love Thy law. Oh, that we had hearkened to Thy commandments, walked in the way of Thy statutes; then had our peace flowed like a river, and our righteousness like the waves of the sea.

Thou knowest our frame, Thou rememberest that we are dust; Thou wilt not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able; with every temptation Thou dost make a way of escape. Pity us in our littleness. When our infirmities gather themselves together into a great humiliation and press us down to the dust with infinite distress, then let the Lord's Almightyness be our defence, and the power of the Lord the sanctuary wherein we rest. We are weary men, we are all tired, we feel out-worn and overdone, the world is too much for our little strength. So we come to Thee, the Almighty, for renewal of power, the Alwise for the rekindling of the lamp of our wisdom. Jesus knows what weariness is, and He, great High Priest, is no stranger to pain. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, having been Himself in all points tempted like we are. Jesus of Nazareth, Christ of God, Man wearied with His journey, sitting on Jacob's well—do Thou look upon us, a multitude of weary travelers, sitting here awhile that we may obtain quietness and get our breath, again; that we may by the study of Thy word and the worship of Thy name be better prepared for to-morrow's discipline and for the burdens we have to bear. Oh, come to us—spare us every one—breathe into our needful hearts all the promises that can sustain and inspire and make the mighty thundering of Thy word soft and gentle and tender, lest it break us by its infinite power when Thou dost mean to recover our strength and to make us still hope in Thee. Amen.

SERMON.

The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary.—Isaiah 1: 4.

Shall I be very far wrong in my estimate if I take you to be, as I myself often am, all weary? Probably there are some young hearts here who will hardly allow themselves to be included in that somewhat mournful estimate, but I think I am speaking along the line of fact, and actual and most painful experience, when I assume that nine men out of every ten in this great multitude know personally, humbly, the meaning of the word *weary*. Some are weary of labor, some are weary of waiting—weary of suffering, weary of the cruel pain that never ceases to gnaw the poor heart. Just in proportion as you understand the meaning of the term “weary” and all that it implies will you enter into the poetry, the genius, the divinity of this exquisite text, “The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary.”

The power of speaking to the weary is, then, according to this text, nothing less than a divine gift. As you see the divinity in your gifts will you be careful of them, thankful for them: every gift seems to enshrine the giver, God. But how extraordinary that this power of speaking to the weary should not be taught in the schools! It is not within the ability of man to teach other men how to speak to the weary-hearted, the wounded in spirit, the sore in the innermost feelings of the being. But can we lay down directions about this and offer suggestions? Probably so, but you do not touch the core of the matter. There is an infinite difference between the scholar and the genius. The scholar is made, the genius is inspired. Information can be imparted, but the true sense, the sense that feels and sees God, is a gift direct from heaven.

It is a common notion that anybody can sing. Why can you sing? Why, because I have been taught. That is your mistake. You can sing mechanically, exactly, properly, with right time, right tune, but really and truly you cannot sing. Here is a man with his notes and with the words; he sings every note, pronounces every word, goes through his lesson, finishes his task, and nobody wants to hear anything more of him. Another man takes up the same notes, the same words, and the same hearers exclaim, “Oh, that he would go on forever!” How is that?—the words exactly the same, the notes identical—how? Soul, fire, ever-burning, never consuming, making a bush like a planet. The great difficulty in all such cases is the difficulty of transferring to paper a proper or adequate conception of the power of the men who thus sway the human heart. There are some men whose biographies simply belie them, and yet every sentence in the biography is true in the letter; but the biog-

raphy is little else than a travesty and a caricature, because the power was personal—it was in the face, in the voice, in the presence, in the gait, in the touch—an incommunicable power; the hem of the garment trembled under it, but no biographer could catch it in his scholarly ink.

It is a common notion that any man can visit the sick. Let me tell you that very few ministers can enter a sick chamber with any probability of doing real and lasting good. They can read the Bible and they can pray, and yet, when they have gone, the room seems as if they had never been there. There is no sense of emptiness or desolation. Other men, probably not so much gifted in some other directions, will enter the sick-room, and there will be a light upon the wall, summer will gleam upon the window-pane, and angels will rustle gently in the air, and it will be a scene of gladness and a vision of triumph. How is that? The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned that I might know how—*how* to speak a word in season to him that is weary. The Lord God hath not only given me a word to say, but He hath given me learning to teach me how to speak it. Place the emphasis upon the *how*, and then you develop all the mystery, all the tender music, all the infinite capacity of manner.

You may say the right word in the wrong tone, you may preach the gospel as if it were a curse. The common notion is that anybody can go into the Sunday-school and teach the young. I fancy that it would be well if a great many persons left the Sunday-school all over the world. Teach the young—I would God I had that great gift, to break the bread for the children, and to be able to lure and captivate opening minds, and to enter into the spirit of the words—

Delightful task, to rear the tender thought,
To teach the young idea how to shoot.

Why, it requires to be father and mother and sister and nurse and genius to speak to the young. They may hear you and not care for you: they may understand your words and be repelled by your spirit. You require the tongue of the learned to know how to speak, and that tongue of the learned is not to be had at school, college, university—it is not included in any curriculum of learning: it is a gift divine, breathing an afflatus, an inspiration—the direct and distinct creation of God, as is the star, the sun.

The speaker, then, is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the representative of the Father, the incarnate Deity. He it is who is charged with the subtle learning, He it is whose lips tremble with the pathos of this ineffable music.

Though the gift itself is divine, you must remember that it is to be exercised seasonably. The text is, "That I should know how to speak a word *in season*." There is a time for

everything. It is not enough to speak the right word; you must speak it at the right moment. Who can know when that is? You cannot be taught. You must feel it, see it hours beyond; nay, you must know when to be silent for the whole twenty-four hours, and to say to yourself, "To-morrow, at such and such a time, I will drop that sentence upon his listening ear." "The day after to-morrow he will probably be in circumstances to admit of this communication being delivered with sympathy and effect." How few persons know the right time—the right time in conversation! Some people are never heard in conversation, though they are talking all the time. They talk so unseasonably, they talk when other people are talking, they cannot wait, they do not know how to come in along the fine line of silence; they do not understand the German expression, "Now an angel has passed," and they do not quickly enough follow in his wake. Consequently, though chattering much, they are saying nothing—though their words be multitudinous, the impression they make is a blank.

I have a ripe seed in my hand. As an agriculturist I am going to sow it to-night. And any laborer in the field can tell me that I should be acting foolishly in sowing it just now. Why? "It is out of season," the man says. "There is a time for the doing of that action; I will tell you when the time returns—do it then, and you may expect a profitable result of your labor."

Then I will change my character and be a nurse, and I will attend to my patient (perhaps I will over-attend to him—some patients are killed by over-nursing), and I will give the patient this medicine—it is the right medicine. So it is, but you are going to give it at the wrong time; and if you give the medicine at the wrong time, though itself be right, the hour being wrong, you shall bring suffering upon the patient, and you yourself shall be involved in pains and penalties. Thus we touch that very subtle and sensitive line in human life—the line of refined discrimination. You may say, "I am sure I told him." You are right—you did tell him, and he did not hear you. You may reply, "I am perfectly confident I delivered the message—I preached the exact words of the gospel." So you did, but you never got the hearing heart, your manner was so unsympathetic, so ungentle, so cruel (not meant to be unconsciously so), that the man never understood it to be a gospel. You spoiled the music in the delivery, in the giving of the message. The Lord giveth the tongue of the learned that he to whom it is given may know how to speak—how to speak the right word—how to speak the right word at the right point of time. You want divine teaching in all things, in speech not least.

Why, this is a curious word to find in the Bible. Does the

Bible care about weary people? We have next to no sympathy with them. If a man be weary, we give him notice to quit; if he ask us to what place he can retire, we tell him that is his business, not ours. Now, the tenderness of this Book is to me one of the most telling, convincing arguments on behalf of its inspiration and its divine authority. This Book means to help us, wants to help us, says "I will try to help you, never hinder you; I will wait for you; I will soften the wind into a whisper; I will order the thunder to be silent; I will quiet the raging sea; I will wait upon you at home, in solitude, at midnight, anywhere—fix the place, the time, yourself, and when your heart most needs me I will be most to your heart." Any book, found in den, in gutter, that wants to do this should be received with respect. The purpose is good; if it fail, it fails in a noble object.

Everywhere in this Book of God I find a supreme wish to help me. When I most need help the words are sweeter than the honeycomb. When other books are dumb, this Book speaks most sweetly to me. It is like a star—it shines in the darkness, it waits the going down of the superficial sun of my transient prosperity, and then it breaks upon me as the shadows thicken. This is the real greatness of God: He will not break the bruised reed. I have reminded you before that because the reed is bruised, therefore the rude man says he may break it. His argument in brief is this: "If the reed were strong, I should not touch it; but seeing that it is bruised, what harm can there be in completing the wound under which it is already suffering? I will even snap it and throw the sundered parts away." That is the reasoning of the rude man—that is the vulgar view of the case. The idea of healing is the idea of a creator. To destroy is the work of the brute beast; to gather up the poor little wounded child, and hug it to a motherly breast, is a bit of God. That instinct comes out of the Creator: He who creates also heals. Herein we see God's estimate of human nature; if He cared only for the great, the splendid, the magnificent, the robust and the everlasting, why then He would indeed be too like ourselves. The greatness of God and the estimate which He places upon human nature are most seen in all these ministrations in reference to the weak and the weary and the young and the feeble and the sad. Made originally in the image of God, man is dear to his Maker, though ever so broken. Oh! poor prodigal soul, with the divinity nearly broken out of thee, smashed, bleeding, crushed, all but completely damned and in hell—while there is a shadow of thee outside perdition, He would heal thee and save thee. Thou art a ruin, but a grand one—the majestic ruin of a majestic edifice, for knowest thou not that thou wast the temple of God?

When I am weary, even in my weariness God sees the possibility of greatness that may yet take place and be developed and supervene in immortality. How do we talk? Thus: "The survival of the fittest." It is amazing with what patience and magnanimity and majestic disregard of circumstances we allow people to die off. When we hear that a million of them have perished, we write this epitaph on their white slate tombstones: "The survival of the fittest required the decay of the weakest and the poorest." We pick off the fruit which we think will not come to much. The gardener lays his finger and thumb upon the tree, and he says, "This will not come to much"—he wrenches the poor, unpromising piece of fruit off the twig and throws it down as useless. In our march we leave the sick and wounded behind. That is the great little, the majestic insignificant, the human contradiction. We go in for things that are fittest, strongest, most promising, healthy, self-complete, and therein we think we are wise. God says, "Not a lamb must be left out—bring it up; not a sick man must be omitted; not a poor publican sobbing his 'God be merciful to me a sinner' must be omitted from the great host. Bring them all in, sick, weary, wounded, feeble, young, illiterate, poor, insignificant, without name, fame, station, force—all in: gather up the fragments that nothing be lost." I will go to that Shepherd—He will spare me and love me. When my poor strength gives out, He will not set His cruel heel upon my neck and kill me; He will gather me up in His arms, and make the whole flock stand still till He has saved His weakest one.

Oh! poor worn heart, didst thou but know the name for thy pain, thou wouldst call it *sin*. What dost thou need, then, but Christ the Son of God, the Heart of God, the Love of God. He will in every deed give thee rest. He will not add to the great weight which bows down thy poor strength; He will give thee grace, and in His power all thy faintness shall be thought of no more. Poor soul, I can well feel for thee, for I know how dark it is when the full shadow of our sin falls upon our life, and I know how all the help of earth and time and man does but mock the pain it cannot reach. Say not that Christ will not go so low down as to find one so base and vile as thou: I heard Him calling for thee; I heard His sweet voice lift itself up in the wild wind and ask whither thou hadst fled, that He might save thee from death and bring thee home. My yearning, silent one, I see thine upstarting tear, and I know what it means, for I, too, have had baptism of that same dew. My life for it, if it be not every whit the very truth of God, that Christ wants thee, and will save thee. I will go with thee, step by step, as far as man may go, for I have been there before and know the way of Christ with men. There is no wrath in

His face or voice, no sword is swung by His hand as if in cruel joy, saying, "Now at last I have my chance with you." His eyes gleam with love; His voice melts in pity; His words are gospels, every one. Let Him but see thee sad for sin, full of grief because of the wrong thou hast done, and He will raise thee out of the deep pit and set thy feet upon the rock. I wait for thee, poor, poor soul, that we may go hand and hand to Christ this night. Thou knowest that I am no fierce preacher of malediction and curse upon the poor trembling penitent. I search my heart for tender speech, for gentle word, and I ask Heaven to bless me with the gift of the persuasive tone, that I may call thee by name, sweetly as a mother might call a runaway child back to her side. Say, poor black soul, with stains upon thee like wounds, say, "I will arise and go to my Father." I cannot try. How can I? Try: the saying of it will do thee good. Oh, if I could get some throats so to open as to express this prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner," the very opening of the throat, the very opening of the lips would do that soul good! The saying of it will be like the first breath of the spring wind, melting the bands of frost and bringing up flowers and birds—flowers that cannot die, birds that bring their own light with them.

Many a time I should have sunk right down without hope of rising again but for this sweet couplet—

Christ is strong to deliver and good to redeem
The weakest believer that hangs upon Him.

I am not triumphant always, sometimes much broken, and the darkness is round about me like three-fold, seven-fold night. God I have none, nor Christ, nor hope, nor Heaven—nothing but a memory black as darkest night. What can I do then but remember that the Bible was made for the weary, and the poor, and the sick, and the lame, and the halt and the blind, and the maimed—for the infirm, for those that have no friend and no helper; a book for the wilderness, not for the garden. You know you will fall back again if you do come? Well, still come. Do we not all fall back?

Prone to wander, Lord I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love:
Take my heart, Lord, take and seal it,
Seal it from Thy courts above.

What said He? He said, "If thy brother turn again, saying, I repent, forgive him, even until seventy times seven." If He laid down that measure for us, what must be the measure of His own pardoning mercy? I want victory to-night, surrender on the part of human hearts. If I could take thee, sinner, with me now, I should feel like a king who has won his last battle, and thou wouldst feel like a slave breathing the first breath of the living air of liberty.

"Are there few that be Saved?"

A SERMON

PREACHED BY F. W. FARRAR, D.D.,

(Canon of Westminster)

IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY, ON SUNDAY AFTERNOON, NOVEMBER 18TH, 1877.

Then said one unto Him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And He said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate.—Luke xiii: 23, 24.

This passage, my brethren, gives us the very essence of our Lord's teaching respecting the present and the future. Since He had dwelt so often on the difficulty and narrowness of the up-hillward path, and on the few who toil in it, whereas we see many rushing along the broad road that leadeth to destruction, some one who perhaps had more spiritual, speculative curiosity than moral earnestness, wanting to know the issues of this conflict, asked Him the plain, direct question, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" Now, supposing that it was so—supposing that, as thousands of theologians have taught for thousands of years, the vast majority are, in the next world, forever lost, would it not have been only fair to admit it? Would not our Lord's teaching have gained terrific force from admitting it? Had the answer to the question been a plain, "Yes, only few are saved," and had that view been as essential to morality as some assert, surely it would have been worse than dangerous—it would have been (be it said with reverence) wrong to suppress it. But what is the answer of the Divine Wisdom? Is it some glaring deluge of fire and brimstone for billions of years? Is it in that style in which the coarse terrorism of the Puritan is at one with the coarse terrorism of the Inquisition? No; but it is a refusal to answer. It is a strong warning to the questioner. It is a tacit rebuke to the very question. It is the pointing to a strait gate and to a narrow way whereby alone we can enter into the kingdom of God. In this sad world it is but the few who find that way, and until they find it they cannot see the kingdom of God; but there is not one word here about an irreversible doom to material torment. If we still yearn for any nearer answer about the future, we may find it perhaps in the glorious words of the prophet Isaiah, "Fear not, for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west: I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: Bring my sons from afar, and my daughters from the ends of the earth." Or, in the dazzling vision of the seer of the Apocalypse, "I beheld,

and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb clothed with white robes and palms in their hands." Or, again, we may find it in those calm words of our Lord's own promise, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you." But the spirit of the answer of our blessed Lord on this occasion is this: "The fate of the souls whom He hath made is in the hands of Him who made them, and not in thine. Enter thou in at the strait gate."

It was in that spirit, my brethren, that I strove to speak to you last Sunday, believing that much popular teaching about the awful subject of future retribution—its physical torments, its endless, and necessarily endless duration—gives us an utterly false picture of the God of love, which, though it may find warrant in texts wrongly translated or ignorantly misunderstood, finds no warrant either in the general tone of Scripture or in God's no less sacred teachings through our individual souls. And if some would represent such a view as dangerous, I reply that my only question is, Is it true? It is falsehood which is always dangerous, but truth never. It is not for us to construct, after our own fashion, the unseen world. Things are as they are. Theologians may go on spinning their systems until the world's end; but things are as they are, and they will be as they will be; and for us to misrepresent them by the fallibility of human system, or, worse still, at the bidding of human expedients, is a blasphemy against truth and against God. What is dangerous is to drive some into indignant atheism and to entangle others under frightful superstition, and to crush yet others with a horrible despair, by representing to them Him whose name is Love as a remorseless avenger, instead of as a Father gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, "neither keepeth He His anger forever." You think, perhaps, that men will not love God without the terrors of an endless hell. So thought not David. He said, "There is mercy with Thee; therefore shalt Thou be feared." Evil souls and foolish souls, I know, make any doctrine dangerous. St. Peter tells us that they wrested the writings of St. Paul, as they did also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction. Would you, therefore, have had the Scriptures *unwritten*? Ought St. Paul never to have taken to his pen? Some of the fathers, I am afraid, held what I believe to be truth in this matter, just as hundreds of our best clergy I know hold it at this day, but fear to preach it. But the greatest and best of the fathers did preach it, and many of the saints, at whose feet I would gladly sit, have preached it in this age. And if we see a truth are we to be orthodox liars for God by suppressing it, because those think it dangerous who believe

in no more potent motive for virtue and the love of God than a ghastly fear? Are we to come before the very God of truth with a lie in our right hands? Richard Baxter—a saint of God, if ever there was one—avowed his belief that even a suicide, if hurried by sudden passion to self-slaughter, may be saved. "And if," he nobly added, "if it should be objected that what I say should encourage suicide, I answer I am not to tell a lie to prevent it." But oh, my brethren, I am not afraid, and I shall never be afraid, of doing harm by asking you to think noble things of God. I am not afraid to bid you plead with Him, in the spirit of righteous Abraham, with "Be it far from Thee, O Lord! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Or to say of Him with holy Paul, "Shall there be injustice with God? God forbid." I am not afraid to plead with Him that syllogism which, as Luther said, sums up all the psalms of David, "The God of pity pities the wretched. We are wretched, therefore, not surely in this short world only, but forever, God will pity us."

Punish us? Yes, punish us, because He pities; but God judges that He may teach; He never teaches that He may judge. He will, indeed, condemn us; it may be hereafter, and it must be, if we die in willful sin, to His *αιωνιος* fire; but it is the fire of love. It is to purify, and not to torture; it is to melt, and not to burn; and we would be melted by that fire of love, by flames far fiercer than are blown to prove and purge the adulterated silver ore. God Himself tells us that He afflicteth not willingly, but for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness; but it would be the utter contrary of this to torture us forever in a hopeless hell. And shall we believe His own words? Our Church, thank God! wiser than her wisest, tenderer than her tenderest ministers, speaks otherwise in her burial service; and I, who believe in a God whose name is Love; who rely with all my heart on the mercy of the Merciful; who put my whole trust and confidence in that loving God who is the Saviour of all men; who think that the key to all the dreadful perplexities of life and death lies in the belief that Christ lived and Christ died—I say God forbid. I would far rather trust to the instinct of the Christian, and to the Christian poet or saint, than to the pedantry of the Pharisaic dogmatist. I would rather accept, as reflecting the mind of God, the broad humanitarian charity—the keen and tender sensibilities—than the hard systems of heartless theologians. And our greatest living poet writes thus in the very spirit of my text:

At last I heard a voice upon the slope
Cry to the summit, "Is there any hope?"
To which an answer pealed from that high land,
But in a tongue no man could understand.
And on the glimmering summit, far withdrawn,
God made Himself an awful rose of dawn.

Dismissing, then, all controversy, which I never wish to introduce into this or any pulpit, not deigning to answer mere angry ignorance or raging prejudice, but realizing, with deep responsibility, the sacredness of this place, and desiring, in deepest humility, to lead aright the thoughts of men and women with open minds and loving hearts, I will ask you to glance a little closer with me at God's ways with man; not in idle speculation; not in the interests of any dogma; but because a few years hence death stares us in the face, and because faith in the future may beneficially influence our work in the present. Let us for a few moments glance at what we are, and at what we may hope in the future for others and for ourselves.

There are, in the main, three classes of men. There are the saints; there are the reprobates; there is that vast intermediate class lying between, yet shading off by infinite gradations from these two extremes. Of the saints, my brethren, I shall not speak. Their promise is sealed, their lot is sure. Beautiful, holy souls, into whom, entering in every age, the Spirit of God has made saints of God and prophets! They are the joy of heaven; they are the salt of earth. We, every one of us, are better for them, as the dull clods of the earth are better for the snowy hills whence the rivers flow, as the stagnant air of earth is better for the pure winds which scatter the pestilence. Oh, what would the world be, what would England be, what would this great oppressive city be, without them—without the ten righteous, the thirty, the forty, the fifty righteous, for whose sake the heavens do not burst to drown with deluging rain the feeble vassals of lust and anger and wine, the little hearts that know not how to forgive? What would this city be if it were nothing more than sin? Greedy coil of jarring slanders, of reckless competition, of selfish luxury, of brutal vice. Many, we know, are the sinners, and few, we know, are the saints of God, and they are mostly poor, and very often despised; and yet it is they alone who save the world from corruption by the gangrene of its own vices, and from dissolution by the centrifugal forces of its own hate. Their gentle words break upon our wranglings with the balm of love. Their calm faces look in upon our troubles with peace and hope.

"Ever their statues rise before us—
Our loftier brothers, but one in blood.
At bed and table they lord it o'er us,
With looks of beauty and words of good."

A millionaire—a successful man—though the world may crawl at his feet, is but as the small dust of the balance; but, O God, give us saints! About them we have no controversy. We know that they shall be happy. We know that God will treasure them in the day when He maketh up His jewels. We

know that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor heart conceived what God shall give to them that love Him."

But if they, the unassailably secure, be eternally happy, what of the other extreme? What of the reprobates? We see sometimes an heroic virtue; would to God we never saw also a brutal vice! Not far from this place is a vast prison holding some twelve hundred criminals. Every time the great clock of Westminster booms out its chimes to the tune—

"Lord, through this hour be Thou my Guide,
So through Thy power no foot shall slide"—

those prisoners hear it. Among them are some who have got within the arm of the law, but are hardly criminal at all, and these might even be liberated. Others there are who have fallen into crime only from surrounding temptations, and from natures weak, but not depraved; these might be reclaimed. But some there are whom those who know them describe as filthy, cruel, brutal, irreclaimable, and whom society gives up. It is thus, though I have been obliged greatly to suppress and soften his words, that one of the greatest of our living writers speaks of them. "Miserable, distorted blockheads," he calls them, "with faces as of dogs or oxen—angry, sullen, degraded—sons of a greedy, mutinous darkness—base-natured beings, on whom, in a maleficent life of London scoundrelism, the genius of darkness has visibly set his seal—who," he asks, "could ever command them by love? A collar round the neck, a cart-whip laid heavily on the back—these in an impartial and steady human hand? Or what should be afforded them?" And he proposes, with all speed possible, to get rid of them at once. Well, my brethren, the punishment of all crime is just, and society has a right, by a stern punishment, to protect the innocent, and yet I rejoice with all my heart that the Saviour of mankind never spake in terms like those. I rejoice that He rather said that He came to bring sinners to repentance—to seek and to save those that were lost. And if you ask me whether I must not believe in endless torments for these reprobates of earth, I answer "Ay, for them, and for thee, and for me too, until we have learned with all our hearts to love good and not evil; but whether God, for Christ's sake, may not enable us to do this even beyond the grave, if we have failed to do so on this side the grave, I cannot say. I know that God hates sin, because He loves the soul that it destroys. I know that the path of that hatred is as the path of a flaming sword, which he who hath eyes may see, divinely beautiful and divinely terrible, everywhere burning up as with unquenchable fire the false and death-worthy from the true and life-worthy. Yet I know also that for these reprobates Christ died. The bigot may judge their souls if he will, the Pharisee may consign them with orthodox equanimity to end-

less torments; but I cannot, will not "forbear to judge" said the wise and holy king by the awful death-bed of Cardinal Beaufort, when he died and made no sign—

Forbear to judge, for we are sinners all :
Close up his eyes, and draw the curtain close,
And let us all to meditation.

Born and bred as these have been, surrounded as they have been with sights and sounds of degradation, what should we have been—what wouldst thou have been, O comfortable bigot? What wouldst thou have been, O prosperous Pharisee, if thou in this world hadst had no more chance than these? Pointing to a murderer as he went on his way to execution, "There," said a good and holy man, "there, but for the grace of God, goes John Bradford." If, as we look into the abyss of our own hearts, we see infinite potentialities of guilt and vice, so, as we look on these, we see in them, in spite of all their shame and stain, the infinite potentialities of virtue; and is it not almost blasphemous to suppose that He who created human beings with such rich capacity as these, should throw them from Him forever into everlasting darkness? Not mine, at any rate, shall it be to close against them, with impetuous recoil and jarring sound, those gates of hell, lest they should be more justly closed upon me; but I commend them, with humblest hope, even after this life of hopelessness, to Him who did not loathe the whiteness of the leper, and who suffered the woman who was a sinner to wash His feet with tears. That without holiness none can see God; that every guilty deed of every sinner, if unrepented of, must bring a just and awful retribution; that for every impure and for every cruel soul there remaineth, if it repent not, even behind the clouds of this world, the dark night—that I know; but when I remember that even these reprobates had been known to burst into tears at a mother's name, that even these have been known at times to flash out into high deeds of momentary heroism, I say that God's spirit has nowhere taught us that He who gave cannot give back; that He who once made them innocent children cannot restore their innocence again; that He who created them—He who wills them to be saved—cannot recreate them in His own image—cannot obliterate all their vileness in the blood of Christ, and uncreate their sins. At any rate, no arrogant word, no theologic dogma, no acrid prejudice of mine, shall ever utter to them the language of despair, or stand between these and God's light and His love. The Good Shepherd Himself has told us, and must we not believe His words, that He will not cease to search for these, the lost sheep, until He find them? Here, again, the Christian poet teaches us far more truly than the hard theologian;

"Still, for all slips of her,
One of Eve's family,
Wipe those poor lips of her,
Oozing so clammy;
Cross her hands humbly
As if praying dumbly,
Over her breast—
Owning her weakness,
Her evil behavior,
And leaving with meekness
Her sins to her Saviour.

But, my brethren, lastly, the vast, vast mass of mankind belong to the third class. They are not utter reprobates; they are not perfect saints. They may rise to the one, they may sink to the other, but for the most part they are, like all of us, undecided. They try to face both ways. They halt between two opinions. They are neither cold nor hot. They have not closed heart and soul with good; they have not abandoned themselves utterly to evil. They want to be pardoned, yet they want to retain the offence.

They shudder to be in a state of sin, yet they attain not to a state of grace. There is the temper in them, and there is Christ. Now they sin with reckless abandonment; now they repent with bitterest remorse. The angel has them by the hand and the serpent by the heart. To how many of us here will these words apply? We break no law of man; to the eye of man it might seem that we break no law of God, but, oh, what would be thought of us if we were all seen as we are—if our hearts were naked and open to each other as they are to God? And it is those who do try to be God's children who most realize their own exceeding sinfulness. This is why the cry of remorse and anguish which springs from the lips of a Fenelon or a Cowper is far more bitter than any confession which is ever wrung from a Richelieu or a Voltaire. Many, many of these better and saintlier and tenderer souls have been, I believe, utterly and hopelessly made wretched even to madness, as poor Cowper was, by that false view of God which is given by the pitiless anathemas of man. To all this comes the cry, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith our God." Your own holier instincts tell you so. Son or brother or friend or father dies—we all have lost one. It may be that they were not holy, not even religious, perhaps not even moral men; and it may be that, after living the common life of men, they die quite suddenly and with no space for repentance; and if a state of sin be not a state of grace, then certainly, by all rules of man's theology, they had not repented; they were not saved. And yet, when you stood, O father, O brother, heavy-hearted by their open grave, when you drank in the sweet words of calm and hope which our Church utters over those poor remains;

when you laid the white flowers on the coffin; when you heard the dull rattle of "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust," you who, if you knew their sins and their failings, knew also something of all that was good and sweet and amiable and true in them, dared you—did you, even in the inmost recesses of thought, consign them, as you are honestly bound to do—as you ought to do if you held the creed which you sometimes profess to hold—dared you and did you consign them, even in your thoughts, to the unending anguish of the popular creed you teach? Or did your heart, your conscience, your sense of justice, your love of Christ, your faith in God, your belief in Him of whom you sing every Sunday that "His mercy is everlasting," rise in revolt against your nominal profession then?

You can bear to think of them as you can bear to think of yourselves, suffering as they never did on earth the aching glow of God's revealing light, the willing agony of God's remedial fire. We should all desire—we should even pray for that. It is the natural consequence of our own alienation, meant, not to torment us, but to profit. An arbitrary infliction of burning torment, an endless agony, a material hell of worm and flame, a doom to everlasting sin, and all this with no prospect of amendment, with no hope of relief—the soul's transgressions of a few brief hours of struggling, tempted life, followed by billions of millenniums in scorching fire, and all this meant not to correct, but to harden, not to amend, but to torture and degrade.—do you believe in that for any one whom you have ever loved? Again I say, God forbid! Again I say, I fling from me with abhorrence such a creed as that. Let every Pharisee gnash his teeth if he will; let every dogmatist anathematize; but that I cannot and do not believe. Scripture will not let me; my conscience, my reason, my faith in Christ, the voice of the Spirit within my soul, will not let me. God will not let me. What I do believe is this: That for every willful sin which we commit, unless it be repented of, we shall hereafter, as we do now, feel the heavy and the merciful wrath of God until He hath purged the vile dross from us and made us as the fine gold for Himself.

One has said—and it seems to me, and the highest authorities, too, have declared—that we, in this Church of England, may have and cherish this hope, that they who have had no chance here shall have one there; that they who had a poor chance here shall have a better there; that they who have had a good chance here and lost it will get a new and severer chance; and even while they feel the inevitable results of their sin and folly, will feel also the hands that reach through darkness moulding man. What! shall nature fill the

hollows of her coarse, rough flints with purple amethysts? Shall she, out of the grimy coal, over which the shivering beggar crouches to warm his limbs, form the glittering diamond which trembles on the forehead of a queen? Shall man take the cast-off rubble and slag of the furnace and educe from it his most lustrous and glowing dyes? And shall God, the God of nature, not be able to make anything of His ruined souls? And what! shall we be able to pity and to love—as we can, thank God, pity and love those who have wronged us? shall we be willing to pardon our prodigals and to call them home? And shall God not be willing, or, if willing, who shall dare to say that He is not able even beyond the grave? Shall mortal man be more just than God? Shall man be more just than his Maker? We made them not these sinners. They are not the people of our pasture or the sheep of our hand; and yet, if we can feel for them a sincere and yearning love and a trembling pity, and if that love and pity spring from all that is holiest and most Christ-like in our souls, and if it would be wholly impossible for even us guilty creatures to be as remorseless as to condemn our very deadliest enemies to an endless vengeance, are we to believe this of God? To believe that He who planteth mercy in us cannot be merciful? To believe that He will, in those words of a theologian which I quoted last Sunday, hold us up with one hand and torment us with the other, though He knoweth our frames and remembereth that we are but dust?

Or, shall we not rather believe, as the wise woman of Tekoah said to David three thousand years ago, "We must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground?" And God does not take away life, but devises devices that the wanderer may not be forever expelled from Him.

Yes, where sin aboundeth grace shall much more abound. If God visits the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generations of them that hate Him, He showeth mercy, not only unto thousands, as our version has it, but unto the thousandth and thousandth generation of them that love Him and keep His commandments; and so always in God's promises, though not in man's systems, in God's revelation, though not in man's beliefs, there is a vast overbalance of mercy above wrath, and therefore, my brethren, let us not fear. Have faith in God. Think noble things of God. Be sure that trust in the righteous God means the triumph of good over evil. Be sure that the course of Christ, and Christ's plenteous redemption, and Christ's infinite atonement, must in some way, though we know not how, mean—or, at any rate, we may suppose it to mean—that the evil of this world shall be transformed into its good, and that earth's sinners—far off it

may be—shall be transformed, far off, yet at last, into God's saints.

I say to thee, Do thou repeat
To the first man thou mayst meet
In lane, highway or open street,
That we, and he and all men, move
Under the canopy of love,
As broad as the blue sky above.
And ere thou leave him say yet thou
This one word more, They only miss
The winning of that final bliss
Who will not count it true that love,
Blessing, not cursing, reign above,
And that in it we live and move.
And one thing further make him know,
That to believe these things are so,
This firm faith never to forego,
Despite of all it seems—that strife
And curses are with blessings rife—
That this is blessing; this is life.

The Surrender to Infidelity—A Reply to Henry Ward Beecher.

A SERMON

PREACHED BY Justin D. Fulton, D.D.

Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him who formed it, Why didst thou make me thus?—Rom. ix: 20.

The surrender to infidelity by the so-called Christian minister is the most alarming feature of the hour. There seems to be a race on the part of many to see who shall first desert God and His Word, and by so doing win the favor of the world. The sentiments of Universalists, who claim that God is too good to condemn any one to eternal punishment, and of Romanists, who claim that through purgatorial fire all will be fitted for heaven, are at the present time in high favor, while the old and tried foundations are being deserted and the truths of Revelation are claimed to be exploded by "the crucial tests of modern scholarship." Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, in an interview reported in the *New York Herald*, January 20, 1878, says: "I doubt whether in the days of the Old Testament, or in the Jewish mind at the time of our Saviour, the sharp, metaphysically accurate idea of time and duration existed. I believe that what they meant by eternal was a vague and nebulous period of time, and that it was not used in a sharp, scientific sense, but in a poetic, or rather in a generalizing sense; just as we say a hundred when we only mean many, or as we say forever when we simply mean long periods of time." The folly of such an utterance, to call it by no worse name, needs but a moment's consideration to make it apparent. It is a sword that cuts both ways. If *forever* means nothing regarding hell, it means no more when used in reference to heaven. It snaps the cable of hope, and permits the voyager to eternity to drift on an unexplored sea amid storms and currents, without a chart and without a compass. It is strange that hearers in such a congregation do not arise and use the language of the women who looked into the open sepulchre, saying: "They have taken away our Lord, and we know not where they have laid Him." Such utterances unship the rudder of hope, dispel

the power of revelation, and change light to gloom. It seems surprising that Christian ministers will consent to yield to Satan and take part in this proceeding. Nothing, since Eve doubted God, and gave ear to a lying serpent, has been more astounding or foolhardy.

MAN SITTING IN JUDGMENT ON GOD.

Shall man sit in judgment on God? Man, weak, narrow, short-sighted, who appeared yesterday and will disappear from the stage of action to-morrow, in his blindness, if not madness, attempts to weigh the declarations of Almighty God, and in his pride sets this one regarding eternal punishment aside, and permits this one that gives a hope of heaven to stand! "Who art thou, O vain man, that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him who formed it, Why didst Thou make me thus?" Paul cherished a conception in his heart of the infinite right of God to rule, and that He held it not with man's consent or permission, but as His own prerogative, and is under no obligation to explain it. As He said to Moses so He speaks to all, saying: "I will have mercy on whomsoever I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomsoever I have compassion." So then it is not of him who walks, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. "Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him who formed it, Why didst Thou make me thus? Has not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor? And what if God, willing to show forth His wrath and to make known His power, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction; and that He might make known the riches of His glory on vessels of mercy, which He had before prepared for glory; whom He also called, even as not from among the Jews only, but also from among the Gentiles?" This is the language of a Sovereign. This Being I worship. Never since the prophet Elijah came unto all the people and said, "How long halt ye between two opinions?—if the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him," has there been a better time to take one's stand on the side of the Lord. As when Moses came down from the top of Mount Sinai, where he had been in converse with the Supreme, he found the people shouting, dancing and singing before the golden calf, and, filled with surprise and dismay, he stood in the gate of the camp, and said, "Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me"; so is it meet that the true heroes and loyal soldiers of our Lord Jesus Christ should declare: I have no new gospel to preach; no explanations to make. The Word of God stands the same. These men who doubt it will suffer because of it, and their names shall be blotted out of God's book. The air

is full of doubt. Religion, in the estimation of many, is but little better than a play, and preaching is little more than a business. In the home, in the sanctuary and in the Sabbath-school, this terrible feature confronts us. Men run wild with infidelity, as if doubting revelation destroyed it, and as if rebellion against God annihilated Him. God's ways have never been submitted to men. They are high above us as are the stars. We may point to them, and declare them, but need not explain them. The battle that is raging all along the line will do good. It will clear the air. It will reveal the characteristics of our so-called Christianity. It will declare whether men believe in God or seek to be pleasers of themselves. It is not surprising that some have spoken out again who have for years been accustomed to throw a tub to this whale of infidelity. There is special need to

STAND UP FOR THE TRUTH AS IT IS IN JESUS.

Not in sorrow, not in anger, but in love to souls and in loyalty to Christ do I call your attention to a few remarkable statements contained in a corrected copy of a sermon preached by Rev. Henry Ward Beecher in Plymouth pulpit. Were I to keep silence I should serve his error. In replying I hope to help forward the truth. He says: "It seems very strange to very many men that the human race were created on a scale so vast and with so little provision for their development." These words are misleading. The human race was created, as described in Genesis i: 27-28, with every inducement and possibility to development. This no one knows better than the author of the utterance given above. Now, I do not come here as an apologist for God. If there is anything that degrades the pulpit, that belittles ministers, it is this seeming fear that Jehovah will lose popular favor; hence this surrender to error, and this trying to keep in with the devil. There are two kinds of ministers. One finds his gospel in what men like; he voices the average sentiment of the hour. Another and a better kind finds out what man needs, and brings from God the balm of Gilead and the message of life, regardless as to whether men, ruined and lost, will bear or forbear. For one, I believe in the God of the Bible and in the Bible of God. I have no desire to argue as to the truth of Revelation. My commission reads: "Go preach to every creature, and whosoever believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and whosoever believeth not shall be damned." Sinners may believe in Christ and be saved. They may reject Christ and be lost. There is but one thing that damns, and that is sin; but one power that can save, and that is the power of faith in Christ. Again, we read: "It is said in the catechism that our first parents were created righteous; that they fell from their original state, and

that their posterity fell with them. Science teaches us that the human race sprang, I will not say how far back, but certainly as far back as the savage condition. This is the modern testimony of science, and it is not contradicted by the catechism. So far the catechism and science agree." To me it is of very little importance what the catechism teaches. There are a great variety of catechisms. As a minister I have to do with the Bible, and not with man-made catechisms. In this case the catechism communicates a Bible truth, and so is valuable. Better, however, let God speak, as He does in Genesis i: 27, where it reads: "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created He them. And God blessed them; and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it." The story of man's fall is given in Genesis iii; in which Satan is described as tempting Eve, who ate the forbidden fruit and died a spiritual death, and gave to Adam, who ate also. When their eyes were opened and they saw their nakedness, and when they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden at the cool of the day, they hid themselves. They were afraid of God. Only the righteous can live in His presence. The sinner is exposed to "wrath which is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness, because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God manifested it to them." This truth is illustrated by the conduct of Adam and Eve in the garden. Then came ruin upon the race. If science tells this story it tells the truth. If it gives any other version of the origin of the race, it tells a falsehood.

THIS SURRENDER EXCUSELESS.

There is no excuse for the surrender. Our first parents were worthy of God's workmanship. They were created in the image of God. They possessed every faculty of mind, body and soul in perfection. The supposition that man became what he is to-day after ages of development is the sheerest bosh, and no one knows it better than the student of history. Man in the early ages—in poetry, in art, in architecture, in skilled mechanism, in great conceptions, as revealed by the monuments left of his genius—was in advance of anything we have to-day. Mankind was not thrown abroad on this continent in myriads, nor on any other continent. The race began in a pair, and grew. This continent was peopled by individuals. They did not come in swarms, as flies or locusts, that spring as a surprise to desolate, destroy and die. Strange utterances here meet us. This is one of them: "It is said that there is a revelation from God, but we should expect if God has made a revelation to the nascent race, that He would have told them how they

are made, what connection there is between their faculties, and what relation they sustain to the world outside of them; but they went on propagating one thousand years, two thousand years, three thousand years, without receiving any information." This declaration fills me with amazement. Had an infidel uttered it I might have passed it by. But coming from such a source it deserves to be noticed. The utterance contains a misstatement of fact. On reading it I felt to sympathize with an old Methodist woman, who, hearing an infidel denying the atonement, shouted out, "Thank God, that's a lie!" We know that God had the gospel preached to Adam and Eve. Abel preached it to Cain, and was slain. Noah was a preacher of righteousness before the tide-wave of wrath swept the race into eternity; and as soon as the flood was past, and the race again began to people the world, the truth was proclaimed by angels and by men. Abram, Isaac and Jacob kept the testimony before the people. Then came Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, prophets, priests and kings, all along to Christ's time. For, from the creation of the world, His invisible things are clearly seen, being perceived by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse. Then the preacher builds up a terrible picture. He describes all the living host as doomed to death and hell; he ignores the warnings given and the trophies of redeeming grace, and intimates that during three-fourths of the history of man "the race was without an altar, or a church, or an authorized priest, a revelation, or anything but the light of nature."

MAN NEVER WITHOUT LIGHT.

The race never was in that condition one moment. For ever since time began, and man became a sentient being, the voice of God has sounded forth to all, and man has been made conscious of his need of a Saviour, as is seen by the temples built, the altars reared, and by the sacrifices offered up. The worst passage is yet to come. He says: "If now you tell me that this great mass of men, because they had not the knowledge of God, went to heaven, I say that the inroad of such a vast amount of mud swept into heaven would be destructive of its purity, and I cannot accept that view." The trouble is, when a man begins wrong he keeps wrong. It is true, nevertheless, that as in Adam all died, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. Christ atoned for Adam's transgression, and offers redemption to all who have sinned. Those who die in unconscious infancy anywhere and at any time are saved by the atonement of Christ. Hence they come, and have been coming for ages and ages, from the North and South, from the East and West, from the wilds of Tartary and Africa, from the steppes of Siberia and the sunny plains of Italy. The number

of the redeemed is so great that no man can number them. They are washed and made clean in the blood of the Lamb.

A SOLEMN OATH.

"If, on the other hand," says the preacher, "you say that they went to hell, then you make an infidel of me; for I do swear, by the Lord Jesus Christ, by His groans, by His tears and by the wounds in His hands and in His side, that I will never let go of the truth that the nature of God is to suffer for others rather than to make them suffer. If I lose everything else, I will stand on the sovereign idea that God so loved the world that He gave His own Son to die for it rather than it should die." Is this language meaningless, or is it Universalism? Is it designed to mislead? The story is told of a negro who heard his minister preach in such a way that, do what he would, he was sure to be damned, and so he resolved to take to the woods. This utterance declares that all cannot go to heaven, and that the residue must not be sent to hell at the peril of making an infidel of the preacher. What is to become of sinners? Does he declare for purgatorial fire, or for an undefined scheme of restoration, or for annihilation? The language is indefinite. It is a fog bank. It is a delusion and a snare. "Tell me that back of Christ there is a God who for unnumbered centuries has gone on creating men and women, and sweeping them like dead flies—nay, like living ones—into hell, is to ask me to worship a being as much worse than the conception of any mediæval devil as can be imagined; but I will not worship the devil, though he should come dressed in royal robes and sit on the throne of Jehovah. I will not worship cruelty. I will worship love that sacrifices itself for the good of those that err, and that is as patient with them as a mother is with a sick child. With every power of my being will I worship a God of love such as that." My friends, God does not need a guardian. He is supreme. The insult to Jehovah is found in the intimation. "Moreover, the Lord answered Job and said, Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct Him? He that reproveth God let him answer it." A man with a Bible within reach, to picture God as dealing with human beings in the way described, makes a terrible mistake. I would not like to run his risk, nor to wear into the presence of the throne the blood of souls which must stain his garments.

A gallant ship, well built and well manned, has its prow pointed toward the El Dorado. It is given out that whoever sails in this ship, though they come from pest-smitten hovels, from damp and dingy cellars, or from the garrets of the poor, they shall be assured of a home, of wealth and of happiness, in the country beyond the sea. The poor, the sad, the smitten come. They are about to embark; they are to leave squalor

for comfort, hunger for food, poverty for plenty. Just then a man well known, who claims to have seen the country at least by the eye of faith, rails against the proposition, calls the maker of it a tyrant, and discourages those who were to seek help from making the attempt. The many refuse to act, and so are left behind to suffer and to die. The illustration does injustice to the fact. Here is a better portraiture of the truth: "God, who in many parts and in many ways, spoke of old to the fathers by the prophets, in these last days spoke to us by His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, by whom He also made the world, who being made the brightness of His glory and the impress of His substance, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself made a cleansing of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, from henceforth expecting until His enemies be made His footstool." That is the God back of our Lord Jesus Christ. "He so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him might have everlasting life."

NO SIN IN HEAVEN.

The truth of the existence of heaven has been sounding out all along the centuries. There is nothing hidden, nothing covered. God cannot look upon sin with allowance. He has purer eyes than to behold iniquity. The man who sins dies. He dies to God's love. He dies to his nobler self. The distinctions between right and wrong are as eternal as God Himself. This truth the preacher felt. It flashed on him. It spoke through him when he said, "The relation between sin and retribution belongs not to the mere temporal condition of things; it inheres in the divine constitution, and is for all eternity." Amen, say God's children everywhere. It is because of this we have hope. It is because of the barrier of God's purpose against letting sin invade heaven that there is any heaven in our thought or hope. "The prospect for any man who goes out of this life resolute in sin may well make him tremble, and may well make us tremble for him."

Sad are we that he should have spoken what follows: "But it is not true—the Scripture does not teach it, and the whole sense of human justice revolts at it—that for the myriads who have been swept out of this life without the light and knowledge of divine love there is reserved an eternity of suffering." Who says that it is true? God declares that the soul that sinneth it shall die. Sin is an act. It is the result of choice. It is because that the sinner knew better than he did that he is punished. It is because none of the lost were righteous—not one—that they are lost. None of them sought God. "They are all gone out of His way. They are together become un-

profitable. There is none that doeth good, not so much as one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips, whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes." Such is a description of the lost.

Hell is not full of innocents. Sinners suffer the wrath of an angry God, not innocents. The intimation that all the lost are in this garden of the Lord, and are to have some chances beside those which they have on earth, and that they are to go up through other schools than those of time, does injustice to the truth of revelation and of common sense. Hell is the prison-house of the damned, created for the devil and his angels. In the words of our Lord concerning Dives in hell, there is between hell and heaven an impassable barrier; there can be no passing from the one to the other locality.

Again, there is nothing in suffering calculated to redeem a man. The man given to lust suffers the most excruciating agony, with the full knowledge that his pain is directly caused by his sin, but after the paroxysm of suffering is over he goes again to his transgression and to his shame. The same truth is seen every day among those who suffer. Go to yonder prison. If any are helped and blessed it is not because of what they suffer, but because of what Christ suffered for them. Sin brings forth evil. Crime begets crime. Men who are bad go on from bad to worse. What makes sin in a child so terrible? It will not grow less, but greater and greater as the years run on. It is difficult to get a man hardened in sin to yield. The hope of this world is largely with the young.

THE DREAM OF PURGATORIAL FIRE.

This dream of purgatorial fire has cursed the earth. It kept thousands in sin because they delighted in it, and caused them to will their property to the Church of Rome after death because of the assurance that there would be, through somebody else's prayers, a way out of hell. They gave their possessions to the Church when they could enjoy them no more. After having refused to surrender to Christ, and having continued in rebellion so long as it was in their power to sin, they pushed on in mad rebellion against God. If salvation for souls is infinite, the word of God misleads that says, "To-day if ye will hear his voice harden not your hearts" "For if we willingly sin, after having received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and a fiery indignation which will devour the adversary." "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." There is not in Scripture, from Genesis to Revela-

tion, any support for this Popish lie—that there is a way out of hell—whether it goes by the name of Restorationism or Purgatory. Our Lord and Saviour, in the twenty-fifth of Matthew, emphasizes this truth: “And when the Son of man shall come in His glory and all the angels with Him, then will He sit on His throne of glory. And before Him shall be gathered all the nations; and He will divide them one from another as the shepherd divides the sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left; then will the King say to those on His right hand, Come, blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation of the world. Then will He say also to those on the left hand, Depart from me, accursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”

This teaches that heaven, the home of God, is the Christian's inheritance, and that hell, the place prepared for the devil and his angels, is to be the future abode of the sinner. These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into everlasting life.

Having now reviewed in brief some of the more misleading portions of the discourse under consideration, let us briefly consider a few reasons why it is not well to reply against God, and why the thing formed should not say to Him who formed it, “Why didst Thou make me thus?”

1. *Because the Gospel does no harm.*—It never invites to a worse, but always to a better life. It never drags down, it always builds up. It calls the sinner away from sin, which is sure to produce death, to a life of holiness, which is ever the prelude to a state of happiness. That invitation to a better life we press upon the attention of those who are still aliens to God. Love presses its claim and exerts its constraining power.

2. *Because God is better and wiser than man.*—He loves as man never could love. He plans with a wisdom which it is not possible to improve upon. Hence, if man goes down to hell, it is because inclination, appetite, lust, and the rule of a carnal heart outweigh the constraining power of the love of Christ and the inducements to lead a better life.

3. *Because man is in danger.*—He is without Christ, without hope. Broad is the road that leads to death, and thousands walk therein. Narrow is the way that leads to life, and few there be that find it. Our mission is to warn sinners to flee from the wrath to come, and to invite them to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and to be saved.

4. *Sinners are in peril.*—Two families, in frail tenements, founded on the sand, lived beside the sounding sea. A bulkhead, also resting on sand, was between them and a restless ocean. A storm came up. It sounded like reverberating thunder. It lashed the sea into foam and lifted the waters into

mighty and threatening billows. Night came on. The storm increased. The women and the children trembled and asked to be removed to a place of safety. The men went out, looked into the face of the maddened sky and came back, saying, "There is no danger." There was danger. It increased every moment. It was heard in the tempest. It was seen in the rising waves. At last the men went to seek for help. It was too late. The waves rose still higher. The storm blew fiercer. The floods arose and swept over the frail support, and houses and inhabitants were whelmed in the waves of the sea.

Another and fiercer storm, dear sinner, is on your track. Jesus Christ offers to save you. Accept Him and live, and be not foolhardy, "O man, whoever thou art and reply against God."

Rooted in Love.

A SERMON

PREACHED BY **Newman Hall, LL.B.**, IN THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, LONDON, ENGLAND.

That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His spirit in the inner man; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.—Eph. iii: 16-18.

What a comprehensive prayer for a universal blessing! What wish can the preacher express better than such a wish as this? God grant that this Church, and that all the Church of Christ may more and more experience the fulfilment of it!

This sublime and comprehensive prayer of the Apostle is addressed unto the "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." God is the Universal Father; He is the Father of the universe in the sense of creating and supporting it; but here He is "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," He to whom Jesus specially appeals. But the same Jesus who appeals to Him as Father taught us to call Him "our Father"; and there is a new relationship set up between us and God. He is "our Father" in Christ, our Elder Brother, through Christ the Only Begotten Son of the Father; for in Christ the whole family in heaven and earth is named. He is the head of the household, the "household of faith"; and however sub-divided, and however we may sometimes fail to recognize the parts of the family through divisions exaggerated and dwelt upon far too much, there is but one family; and all who love God in Christ Jesus are members of that family. Christ is the Elder Brother; in Him we are confederated. Throughout the earth all that call upon Him with sincere hearts are one family. There can be many congregations and denominations, but there is but one family for heaven, and on earth really but one—"the household of faith." There are those who in heaven belong to it, one with those on earth. They have left it, but they have not left the family. Christ is the head of it, and the appeal is made to God "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that He would grant you according to the riches of His glory"; that He would bless them, not according to their merits, not according to their prayers, but according to the riches, the wealth, the unsearchable riches of His glory; and that, in accordance with that infinitude of capacity to supply our need we might be "strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man;" we might be inwardly and spiritually strengthened by His

Spirit, in consequence of which inward strengthening this is the prayer, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith"; that Christ, in whom all fulness dwells; that Christ, the manifestation of God, His dear Son, in whom we know and understand the Deity—that Christ may not visit us occasionally, but take up His abode in our hearts, now paltry habitation as it is, polluted and defiled as it is, yet nevertheless that these hearts of ours may be the abiding dwelling-place of the Lord Jesus Christ! And what a prayer!

Then, as the result of that, we may comprehend the boundlessness of Divine love, and be filled with all its fulness!

The keystone of this wonderful arch is love. "God is love"; and His religion is like Himself—it is a religion of love. The first and great commandment is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart"; and the second is like unto it, namely, this, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Love is the fulfilment of all law; and every development of Christianity is a development of love. Knowledge is essential; but it is a knowledge that comes through love. "He that loveth not knoweth not God." Faith is essential; but it is a faith that worketh by love. Obedience is essential; but it is an obedience that is prompted by love. "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge: that if one died for all, then were all dead; but that He died for all that henceforth we should not live to ourselves, but unto Him that died for us and rose again."

"The fruit of the Spirit is love"; penitence is love, bathing the Saviour's feet with her tears; patience is love, kissing the rod; prayer is love, holding communion with the Father; praise is the adoration of love; hope is the expectation of love; joy is the delight of love; heaven is the full appreciation of love. Love is the bond that unites the whole family. The purity of the robes up yonder is love; the harmony of the music that fills the eternal spheres is love; the light that glitters there is the light of love; and our meetness for heaven, and our progress toward the eternal inheritance, is proportioned to our being "rooted and grounded in love."

"Rooted in love!" I seem to see that grand old oak that I have known, and you may have known such a one from your childhood. What a massive, enormous column of a stem! it is girt with a mass of branches holding up a forest of verdure. You remember it when you were a child, and now you are a man it does not seem to be any older! What generations have rested under its shadows, and what generations have been carried past it to yonder churchyard! How often the storm has visited it! and the violent tempest has shaken its branches and wrestled with it! But still, while many a similar tree has been torn up by the roots, this old oak has shaken its fists at the

storm! The storms of wind and rain have done **it no harm!** There it remains, and there it will remain, unmoved; and while other trees have been uprooted, and the grass has been burnt, and the flowers are hanging their heads, how is it that that old oak remains, so grand and bright in its verdure? Because it is feeding at the reservoirs and secret streams deep down in the earth; and so while this oak is first strengthened to resist the hurricane, and then receiving nourishment from the deep hidden springs and streams, that old oak can stand firmer and firmer. Oh, that we may be so rooted in love and grounded in love!

Look at yonder castle, built upon the spur of the mountain. How gray it is! It looks like the color of the mountain itself; it bears the tints of the neighboring rocks. How often have the rains descended upon it, and the storms beaten upon its walls! But it still stands, because it is firmly fixed upon its rocky foundation. It is established there, and held to its rocky holding by strong clamps, so that the storm and the torrent cannot shake it.

So may we be rooted and grounded in love! And thus being "rooted and grounded in love, we may be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." These terms were not perhaps intended to convey each of them a distinct idea, but generally to represent the vastness of the Divine love; and yet we may make use of these various expressions just to classify what we have to say on the matter.

The "breadth" suggests to us the extent of that love, the vastness of that field for which it is designed, and for which it provides. God loves all His creatures. God loves all mankind. There is no one of the whole human family shut out from the living, the loving Father. Go to the heart of Africa—you shall find it there! Go to the islands of the sea—you shall find it there! Go to the millions of China—you shall find it there! Go to the frozen north—you shall find it there! Go to the torrid zone—you shall find it there! And this love of God finds its largest expression in Christ: "For, as by the offence of one many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life." Love that knows no distinction of clime, or race, or condition—that scorns the narrow boundaries of sect, and of party, and of churches, like His own sun in the heavens shining everywhere and upon all; so that we can say to every individual upon earth, "God loveth thee, and Christ died for thee!" As St. John says: "I saw a great multitude which no man can number, out of every

kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, round about the throne."

And the "length"; that may suggest the duration of His love. It is not a thing of to-day, suddenly conceived and that may be suddenly laid aside; it is from eternity, and has its birth before the foundations of the earth were laid. Look back, and back, and back, and you shall not see its commencement! Look forward, and forward, and forward, and you shall never see the termination of it, for it is also "to everlasting." Through the whole of your journey, however long-continued it may be, you shall find His love with you. It shall accompany you as a telegraphic wire; and down that wire you shall hear, ever murmuring, the whispers of Divine Love to cheer you! You shall find it with you when you reach the river's bank; you shall have it with you when you must pass away from this life into the life beyond the grave; it shall sustain you when all other solaces are taken from you; and, when ages after ages have passed away in heaven, that love shall still endure, undiminished!

And the "depth!" Oh, how *low* has God come with that wondrous love of His! How He stooped to our low estate! People make a great mistake about what is "low." We hear of "low" people, or a "low" condition of society. But it is not always "low" to be poor, or "low" to be engaged in some handicraft or in some humble toil. Real vulgarity, however, is "low"; but that is a mental, a moral, a spiritual lowness. How much that is only conventional is thought to be low! But, oh, the real lowness is sinfulness! How many that are the very highest in appearance are the very lowest in the sight of God! There is that drunkard over the way, reeling, and staggering, and cursing, and we say, "How low!" There is that prostitute, flaunting about in the streets, and we say, "How low!" There is that culprit condemned to many years of incarceration for crime, and again we say, "How low!"

But perhaps there are some here who are lower than any of these in the sight of God. They may perhaps never have known any better; they were perhaps brought up in vice, their parents being drunkards, or from their birth familiar with licentiousness and crime. They were perhaps taught to think that it was clever to thieve and manly to get drunk, while you perhaps have been from your childhood familiar with the name of Jesus, while fathers and mothers have wept and prayed over you, and the Holy Ghost has been maintaining a constant strife with you to give your heart to God, and live a nobler life than one of mere self-seeking. And you have put it deliberately away, and He has been knocking at the door of your heart, and you *knew* He was knocking, and you knew that Christ was there waiting to be admitted! And you felt in your heart, "I will not let Him in! It is God in Christ asking me to let Him in, and I won't!"

And you are respectable, sober, chaste, kind-hearted, honest! Ah, you may be lower than some of the outcasts of society in God's estimation, though not in that of society (far from it), but in the estimation of Him who knows what we cannot know! And there may be some one here who recognizes himself in this general description, and says: "It is all true, and much more than you have said! And when I look upon the drunkard or the prostitute in the street I feel, 'Ah, they never knew better!' and I cry, 'Would I were in their place, for the publicans and the harlots will enter the kingdom of heaven before me!'" Ah, you have sunk lower, friends, you have sunk lower; but the love of Christ and the love of God comes down even to you! There is no depth to which the love of God does not descend. He has sounded the deepest depth of man's sin and misery! Oh, the depth of Divine love!

And the "height!" "He who ascended is the same also that descended; therefore God hath highly exalted Him." He is high upon the throne of universal empire; and He says—"Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am." In the same height of glory to which He Himself has gone; to the same height as that throne on which He reigns; to that height of glory He purposes to bring us—a height to which no weapon can reach; a height at which there can be no sin; a height from which every step may be a stepping stone to higher glories. As the lark soars and sings, and soars and sings, so shall we; but not as the lark, which soars aloft, but ever comes back to earth.

A wondrous love in its breadth—enclosing all; in its depth—reaching to the lowest point of human sin and woe; and in its height stretching upward to the very throne of heaven! May we know this, and know the love of God that passeth knowledge. When Jonathan went out into the field to let David know how matters were going on in Saul's household with regard to David, a lad with him carried his case of arrows; and, when he shot an arrow, the boy was to search for it. And again he shot an arrow. "Go further, the arrow is beyond thee." Ah, Christian, shoot your arrow as far as you can; shoot it as far as your mind and intellect and heart can reach, and you will find this love is still beyond you. "Know the love of Christ";—but, if it passeth knowledge, how is it to be known? There is a fountain of fresh water which comes gurgling out of the mountain side. You do not know the hidden reservoir in the bosom of the mountain from which that stream is bubbling, but you can drink of the stream, and more and more be refreshed by it. You float upon the placid bosom of the ocean in that boat or that ship; you look down into the water, and you gaze in wonder and admiration upon those marvelous depths, where the sea-weeds shine in their colored splendor,

and the pebbles glitter on that deep sea-bottom. You may see the deep depth, but you cannot see the deepest part; yet you may see something and be struck with its beauty, as you sail upon its bosom. Upon those wondrous Alps travelers have walked, but there are heights upon which the most adventurous traveler has never set foot. Yet there are glorious valleys in which you may pluck sweet flowers and enjoy lovely scenery. Where is the east? We cannot tell. How far is the east from the west? You cannot measure it, but you may look toward it; and so it is in religion.

You are floating upon a river, and you can enjoy the pleasant landscapes, and you may find delight in looking at the trees that float over the water. You are floating over the stream, though you cannot tell the fountain from which it commences or the ocean to which it flows.

So we may regard the love of Christ in its benefits to us, and in the increasing manifestation of those benefits. Though we may not know the wonders of that heart of love, yet we may and do feel always the grasp of that wondrous loving Hand. What child knows the depth of its mother's love, the depth of pity, of compassion, of tenderness, of delight in the mother's heart toward that little one? The child can never know that; and yet the child may grow in the knowledge of its mother's love. But God's love!

"Eternal, fathomless, Divine!"

How can we know that? And yet we may know increasingly somewhat of that love, and so we "may be filled with all the fulness" of that love. That is, out of that fulness we may receive a continual supply up to the measure of our capacity, that so we may enjoy Himself! For

"Give what Thou wilt, without Thee we are poor,
And with Thee rich, take what Thou wilt away!"

But is not this an absurd prayer? Isn't it infatuation, fanaticism, for creatures such as we are to ask that Christ may dwell with us, and that we may comprehend the infinite love of God? Has not the apostle been carried away by his own enthusiasm? Ah, what does he say? "Unto Him that is able to *do*." We can think a great deal more than we can put into words; but "Now unto Him who is able to do above all that we can ask." But that is not all; He can do "abundantly"; and that is not all; He can do more than that; He can do "exceeding abundantly!" And that is not all; He "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we are able to ask *or think!*" O wondrous love! O wondrous capacity!

Then, brethren, shall we not ask, in order that we may receive? Shall we not knock, in order that the door may be opened? Shall we not seek abundantly from Him who waits to give abundantly? Shall we be satisfied with a little when

we may have so much? Shall we grovel when we might soar? Should we not seek to *know* what is the hope of our calling? Shall we not open our mouth wide that He may fill it? Shall we not come with gladness to the throne of grace, asking much, that we may have much from Him who delights to bestow much? Oh, then, let us, one and all, earnestly pray "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that He would grant us according to the riches of His grace and glory, to be strengthened with might by His spirit in the inner man; that we, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fulness of God!"

Oh, if there are any here that do not understand this, let them take it to heart! There are some here, perhaps, that want to be filled with the love of the world, the money of the world, the pleasures of the world, the vanities of the world; is that the extent of your ambition? Is that what you desire? Have all these great faculties been given us for us to be satisfied with anything short of God, when this love of God might be shared in by every one of us? Are there those here whose highest ambition, desire and effort is to be filled with the things that perish in the using? Oh, dear friends, let us, one and all, seek to be filled with all the fulness of God; then we have that which poverty, sickness, outward calamities, death itself cannot touch! We have then an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.

Bread for the Hungry.**A SERMON**

PREACHED BY **John Cumming, D.D.**, IN THE SCOTCH CHURCH, CROWN COURT, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON.

And he said, Give unto the people, that they may eat.—2 Kings iv : 42.

You see in this passage how the most remarkable things and facts and circumstances may be put in the simplest and the least sublime language.

Eight hundred years before the birth of the Christian era it was that the circumstances related in this chapter occurred ; and then, no less than now, the statement contained in the text was thought too extreme and too extravagant : “ They shall eat and shall leave thereof.” It was altogether too foolish to express such a hope ; but we shall find that the more we act in union with the word and will and law of the Lord God, the more we shall find that what seems strange and inscrutable and dark will show itself in beauty, and will appear at length in charms which though for a time they may have bewildered our intellects and defied our reason, will at last both delight and instruct us.

Let me notice, first, that the forces of nature are mostly silent. Light, as it streams from the sun and fills the earth with warmth and color, is perfectly noiseless ; but every sunbeam is a marvelous source of strength. The frost is noiseless, and the icebergs which sail in ponderous majesty through the ocean have been built up by the silent operation of this force. For weeks and months they are hemmed in by the same noiseless strength, and held prisoners in their icy dwellings ; but soon the heat of the sun, with the same noiseless might, lifts the veil from the icy ocean, and they crawl onward, carried by other forces to sunnier latitudes.

Again, unconsciously and unheard, the heart every moment sends the current of life along its unseen channels, and we live and think and work. How strange that that little structure called the heart is so capable of great issues, and yet is so easily disturbed or injured by the smallest thing ! God moves indeed, as it is written, in a marvelously silent and mysterious manner :—

“ God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform ;
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.”

Thought again, for instance, does some of the most wonder-

ful and powerful things that are done in the world, but it is silent and unheard. In his laboratory unknown the chemist communes with Nature, and Nature responds and speaks to him of the hidden treasures which are shut up in her storehouses. But they are touched by a stroke, and break upon him in beauty and in blessing. In his laboratory alone the chemist communes with Nature, and tells, as the result, all her mysterious secrets. When the temple of Solomon was rearing, there was no sound of axe or hammer heard as the work went on. It was all silent; only a shout rang upward when the capstone was put in its place!

History is not the booming of cannon; and revolutions are not the result of mighty armies or great fleets; but freedom is struggling silently in the hearts and minds of men, toiling unseen, unknown, unheard in the closet till she prevails; and God comes and speaks with a double voice, which can neither be repelled nor resisted!

Faith, whether in the home, the sanctuary or the closet, is a silent force. There is no noise about it. "Only believe," and the burden of sin rolls off, the sorrows of life are brightened, the darkness flies away; the river of peace flows gently on, and the world is covered with beauty and with blessing.

And now, here is a solemn and beautiful thought, that the Son of God is moving in every congregation, in every home, in every place of worship, in every place where business is transacted. There is no spot which is not visited by God—the Living God! It is a very solemn thing. Here, within these walls, assembled as we are to hear God's Word and to offer up prayer to Him, here Christ is present! There is not a true Church, speaking forth the truth of God, that has not there in her midst Christ Jesus the Son of God—"For whosoever two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." The fountain of love from the eternal hills flows through the fields of our common humanity; and Christ's cross has become the symbol and the realization of the most stupendous things in the world. But it is not especially of these that I would speak now, but of the words of my text—"Give unto the people that they may eat"; and the fitness of this and the bearing of this you will ascertain as we draw to a close.

Intelligent beings are capable of enjoyment, and naturally, therefore, of enterprise to accomplish the designs which they conceive, and to secure the felicity, to some considerable extent, of their hearts and homes.

In the associations of life, and in the right use of every earthly good, there is a higher and a lower use; and the higher good is indispensable to the full enjoyment and to the complete realization of our duty to others. Earthly plans, earthly schemes and earthly purposes are disappointed and thrown off. Some-

times earthly props, on which we have been accustoming ourselves to lean, are taken away, and it is easier to fall than to practice the requirement of the hour.

We may feel that God is near, and yet somehow we may fail in the hour of need. It has ever been so with even the saints of God. Jacob in his trial, although he knew that God was in it, said, "If I be bereaved of my children I am bereaved"—the most expressive and emphatic lamentation which a man can utter: "If I be bereaved of my children I am bereaved;"—"bereaved," that is, "to an extent that cannot be surpassed;" and there is no sorrow so great in the world as that experienced in the weakness, the agonies and the sufferings of little children.

Again, on another occasion, although the darkness was that which should usher in the light, yet in his distress Jacob says, when his sons were going down into Egypt, and Benjamin with them: "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and will ye take Benjamin away? All these things are against me." Are we not often prone to do so? You meet with some disaster in your relationships, with some trial in your home, with some great loss which you think you will never be able to get over; and you say in agony—it has been said thousands of times, in thousands of years, in every variety of circumstance—"All these things are against me."

But, my dear friends, if you have said so (and I have no doubt many of you have said so), have you not found it was not, after all, so unbearable? Have you not often found thereby the most expressive evidence of the love of our Father in heaven pitying His wandering, thoughtless children?

David, again, for example, wept excessively at the death of his child; and when Absalom was killed in battle his sorrow was almost unendurable: "Oh, Absalom, my son, my son! Would God I had died for thee! Oh, Absalom, my son, my son!" What an exquisitely touching yet expressive exclamation is here, in language full of thought, full of passion, and yet rich in that sympathy which makes the waving ocean sweeping over us but a bond of union linking man with man everywhere: "Would God I had died for thee! Oh, Absalom, my son, my son!"

And then Job, again; he had great patience, and yet sometimes he would yield to his distress, and not only forget that God was with him, but would curse the very day of his birth, and wish that his being had been, from that day forward, enveloped in the grave. All this is very wrong; for know that in the most disastrous circumstances, though the waves roll over thee in rapid succession, and though all seems gone from above, and though all seems broken below, yet hold fast this fact, "The Lord liveth"; and God is as much present in the

humblest condition of life as He is in the midst of the cherubim and the seraphim.

If you and I can lay hold of the great truth that God is here, that God never will leave us, never will forsake us; if you can hold that fast, you have anchorage that no ocean wave can loosen, and that no force of man shall be able to shake.

And is it not a comforting thought that Christ has told us He is "God manifest in the flesh"? That wheresoever—in garret or in cellar, or anywhere else—two or three are met together in Christ's name, "there am I," He says, "in the midst of them!" And what a thought is that, that the Son of God is in the midst of this congregation; that He looks to every man's needs and to every man's duty; that the Son of God is estimating what we are and what we do, and to what degree we are contributing to the great issues for which this world is governed!

Job had great patience, and sometimes he would feel resigned; but then again he would yield to his deep sorrow; for even the best man has many, many sorrows, and many sins that need to be forgiven. Well, Job had great patience, and sometimes he felt resigned; but again he felt as if he wished that death had taken him at his birth. He had no right to do that; he had no right to give way to this feeling. No man or woman has a right to feel that. You are to go to God always as *the* Father and *our* Father.

My dear friends, think more of this truth; I wish you would all think less about the troubles of religion, about perplexities here and distractions there! Nestle in the very secrets and intricacies of your conscience and your heart, in the thought that the very Being that stretched out the firmament in all its beauty, that gemmed it with countless stars and suns and moons; that gave flowers to the earth, and their fragrance also, He is present; and He is not an avenging Judge, but "our Father," a loving Father.

I often wonder why people seem drooping and cast down and distressed because they think that God is some awful, terrible, revengeful being. He is no such thing! What is He like? "Our Father which art in heaven;" and everything you need you have only to ask, and more than you have asked He will send to comfort and to bless you!

God has appointed that we should, to some extent, depend upon earthly things. We depend upon each other, we depend upon the fruits of the earth, we depend upon our own labor. Parents love their children strongly and intensely, and they labor earnestly for their earthly support. But, however strongly and intensely a mother may love the infant that she has borne, and which nestles in her bosom, she may forget it; but God says, "Yea, they may forget, yet will I never forget thee."

Hence we find that the love of a parent for his children leads him to care for them and to support them ; and if parents were generally to neglect this duty, and to forget this love, society would be in a more confused state than it is. But though some parents would die for their children, others forget them and forsake them ; yet we know One who in every emergency, every trouble, under every shadow, in every shock of disaster, in every grief, in all that human flesh can suffer, in everything that can harm or affright us, is with us as our loving Father ; and if you are a Christian—(and if you are not, it is a dreadful thing)—there is no agony you have to go through but He is with you. You have no penance to perform to secure His presence ; it is only “ Believe and be saved ;” it is “ Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.” And (oh, sublime, but in some degree terrible, remonstrance !) God Almighty has called not many wise, not many powerful, not many noble ; but He has said—“ Ephraim is my own son ; how shall I give thee up, Ephraim ? Why will ye die ?”

You will die unless you derive life from Him ; but God waits to receive you, and to make you alive for evermore.

I want now to say something which may make you feel that we ought to extend to others the blessings which we ourselves enjoy. We have little idea of the strange sight the world presents to Him who can take in all at a glance. “ We know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now ;” and therefore earth is not yet amalgamated with heaven. It groans in pain and is sore burdened.

What heavy tidings are reaching us every day in the world, in society, in families, among friends, in all the relations of life ! And what a catastrophe (or distress, shall I call it ?) which we have been reading of, most of us, in India, and of which I have been gathering the details, the elements, as well as I could, of what is going on in that land ! The effects of the famine in India are of the most disastrous kind ; and I have been assured that the deaths in the Madras Presidency alone are little short of a million ; and should there be another drought, the state of the people will be still worse. The fear of this has now happily passed away, and the drought has been mitigated, for some showers have fallen. The Evangelical Union says : “ The English mails bring news the most dreadful. For the third year the monsoons have failed, and large tracts of country are desert. The grass is all gone—the very thatch of the huts has disappeared. Women and children are picking out germs of corn from the various refuse heaps.”

And this is in our own country ! And these are a people we are as deeply interested in as the inhabitants of our own islands ; for in a certain sense they are our own people. Again we read that pestilence has accompanied famine ; and in Ban-

galore a special police has been organized whose duties are to prevent the streets being blocked up with the dead and dying. All the supplies will not support more than one-and-a-half millions, leaving three-and-a-half millions of people—men, women and children—to starve!

The editor of the *Madras Times* writes, under date August: "The population affected by the famine numbers twenty-four millions, and of these at least one-sixth will die. In Madras out of every thirty thousand rising each morning thirty will die." A coffee-planter found on the road-side six decomposing bodies; and there are instances of mothers offering their children for sale. Since the famine commenced five hundred thousand people have died from sheer want, destitution and distress. The greatest tragedies are recorded, and in Mysore cases of cannibalism have occurred.

The resources of the Indian Government are likely to be crippled for some time to come, and in Madras alone, to the end of July, three millions of money had been expended upon direct relief. The death of the cultivators, and the large quantity of land allowed to go out of cultivation, will diminish still more the available resources; and there is a very dark future in store for the people of India.

There was a dearth in the land in the days of Elisha. And Elisha came to the College of the Prophets, and found that they were in want of sustenance. There was no food in the house. And Elisha told them to take the great pot, and put it on the fire, and to make a nourishing soup that they might eat. There was nothing to put in the pot, but one went out into the fields and gathered herbs; and finding a wild vine, he gathered a lap full of wild gourds and cast them into the pot, not knowing what he did. And when they sat down to eat, as they were eating, they cried out—"O thou man of God, there is death in the pot!" Then the prophet said—"Bring meal." And he cast it into the pot, and he said—"Pour out for the people that they may eat. And there was no harm in the pot." And a day or two afterward the prophets were still in want of food; and then a devout man came to the prophet with a present, which consisted of twenty loaves. Elisha said: "Give unto the people that they may eat." The servant is astonished to receive such a command as this, when there were one hundred men to be fed. But the prophet replied: "Give unto the people that they may eat; for thus saith the Lord, They shall eat and shall leave thereof."

We have not one hundred men famishing now in India, but hundreds of thousands—nay, even hundreds of millions. It is a dreadful catastrophe. In this great famine they are perishing for want of food!

The Church must feed the people. It is not for us to say

we hope they will be fed, and then settle down in our ease. It rests upon each and all to have a share in helping, and to do his part. Faith always does as much as it can; and if it cannot do all it would, it must still do something. Christ is among us, even in such a disaster as this. To the woman of Samaria at the well He said, "I that speak unto thee am He." To the disciples in the storm He said, "It is I, be not afraid." To the Jews He declared, "I am the bread of life which cometh down from heaven;" and in stating His relation to the Father, "I am from Him, and He hath sent Me." Still more impressively He says, "I am the door of the sheep; I am the Good Shepherd; the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep." At the gate of the tomb, and in the presence of death, He declares, "I am the resurrection and the life;" on another occasion, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." So completely does Jesus present Himself as available to all. He will speak in answers of light and love and abundance to the natives of India when they ask for the "bread which cometh down from heaven." That is available for every man.

We are passing through great scenes; we are hasting toward a greater crisis. In a few more years, if commentators in prophecy are not quite mistaken, we shall enter upon a different condition of things. This poor earth of ours shall enter among the gardens of light. Her groans will end; her surface, which has been stained with blood, will be cured, and a religion of peace will cover the earth! The storm shall be hushed!

Do you ask what sort of scenes shall those be? I answer, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." Do you see there is a grand preparation of peace, of happiness, of blessing for them that love Him?

Do you love Christ? Do you hold up that Blessed Redeemer as *your* Redeemer, your Saviour, your hope, and your all in all? Are you looking for the "house not made with hands"? I believe that the great epochs of prophetic investigation are now all but exhausted. I believe that all this dread agony and bloodshed in the East is not a random thing. It is for the carrying out of a great and awful issue. We are approaching the time when God's ancient people shall arise and return, and dwell in Mount Zion, as they are hastening to do now; and when God's people who stand by the great truths of Christianity shall be so guarded that no mother's son shall have a hair of his head disturbed; for his trust, and the confidence of his heart, is in the Rock of Ages.

Salvation is at every man's door; and if you are not saved, the only explanation is that you will not let God Almighty save you! What a terrible thing, that God offers us a Saviour and we will not be saved! "Behold, I stand at the door of

your heart, your home, your life, your everything; I stand at the door and knock. If *any man* will hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and sup with him, and he with me." What a thought is that—Christ is at every door calling at every place, calling for admission; and if you cannot give admission, or if you have not room to give admission, you can at least offer your contribution for the relief of the suffering. From all I have read, India is under the darkest cloud; and the people are suffering to an extent and to a degree unprecedented in our history. And if that be the case, the best way to bring back sunshine to them is to help them in their deep distress.

I do not say that at this season of the year, when so many are absent, we can give much; but if every one gives something, gives it in the sight of God, Christ recognizes it, and it will not be forgotten. It is one thing to give and another thing to want credit for what we give; but it is true that "he that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord"; so that when you retire, and the elders hold the plate to receive your offerings, you will give to the Lord; and you lend it to Him; and I believe that He will bless them that thus seek the honor and to serve Him. For He has said it; and His word abideth forever.

"He leads thee on through all the unquiet sea,
Past all the dreary hopes, and doubts, and fears."

The Son of God will not forget you, even the least of you. This most beautiful truth is expressed in these words: "Suffer the little children to come unto me." Some hard-hearted, thoughtless beings would drive children away; but Jesus says, "Suffer little children to come unto me"; and He says, "Look on those spring flowers of humanity, and remember that of such is the kingdom of heaven." If children ask for bread (and in India they are asking it at the point of death), do not give a stone, or anything that, is not bread; but give your best; and I believe that without attaching any unscriptural meaning to the act, the man who gives from his heart a blessing or a bit to one who suffers, or is in distress, will not be forgotten of God, but it will be returned to him a thousand-fold.

Divine Forces in Human History.**A SERMON**

PREACHED BY PROF. A. J. Nelson, M. E. Church, SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

The Lord reigneth: let the earth rejoice: let the multitude of isles be glad thereof, etc.—Ps. xcvi: 1, 2.

An old-time Thanksgiving proclamation. Not a formal State paper, but a sublime utterance from a grateful heart: not extravagant rhetoric, but a grand doctrine, warm and fresh from the deep fountains of the soul.

A long and bloody struggle of seven years had ended. The Philistines had been subdued, the Ammonites defeated, and the Moabites crushed forever. Israel could shout victory over the allied forces of Western Asia. David issued the proclamation. Zion was glad, and the daughters of Jerusalem rejoiced.

The doctrine announced is older than Plymouth Rock, the duty enjoined as universal as moral obligation.

David was an old-fashioned theologian. He believed in a divine, present, personal, superintending Providence. We meet to-day not as religious enthusiasts, to propagate our faith under the protection and by the aid of State authority, but as the representatives of the Christian conscience of the nation, to conserve the public freedom and promote the general welfare of the country, by the worship of the Great Ruler, in conformity with the political postulate upon which our great republican institutions are built, viz.: The highest civilization is always found in connection with the purest forms of religion and the most intelligent ideas of God.

The first truth announced in the text is the Thermopyla to modern thought. There is a class of public teachers who tell us that God is impersonal and unknowable—that both matter and mind are under inexorable law; that nothing could be different from what it is; that the world is passing through a series of revolutions—physical, political and social; that by a mysterious law of development each change is a step in advance, each civilization a growth and improvement on the former; that all the revolutions of history, the rise and fall of empires, are the results of fixed laws, as demonstrable as Espy's theory of rain-storms; that the world is without a Supreme Governor, not because there is none, but because none is needed; that science is the method of adjustment of all the forces of the world; that the doctrine of a Divine Providence is the outgrowth of ignorance and superstition; that the antagonistic forces that are at work cracking and cleaving asunder

the political and social crust of the Old and New World, remodeling governments and building new civilizations, are the resultants of physical causes as certain and demonstrable as the elimination of heat when water is poured upon unslacked lime; that the world's great leaders are only a chemical compound, made up of the sum of the influences that surround them—the land that gave them birth, the age in which they lived, the food they ate, determine whether they be a Garibaldi or a MacMahon, a Pope Pius or a Présensé, a Grant or a Sitting Bull. These philosophers laugh at days of thanksgiving—testing religion as they would the temperature of the ocean, with a gauge. They pronounce public worship a religious humbug, and try to stop the saints from praying and the angels from singing by coarse wit and base ribaldry. But truth was never born to be laughed out of the world. There never has been a time since the text was uttered that the brains and morals of the world could not be assembled on an occasion like this. The God of this nation is David's Lord, and no common sovereign. He is alone supreme—uninfluenced by the voice of majorities, cunning diplomacy, or political prestigation. He consults no cabinets or parliaments. He is before all constitutions and all law. He is Legislator, Judge and Executive. The God of this nation must not be reduced to an eternal principle or an immutable law. He cannot be crowded out of the universe to suit the convenience of philosophic systems.

God reigns over all matter, both organic and inorganic. The age has come when we must study geography from a Christian standpoint. Worship, to be acceptable, must be *intelligent*. Genuine enthusiasm is the enthusiasm of truth. Faith has its basis in the logic of facts. Our vast oceans and rich valleys and mineral mountains are divine facts, magnificent object-lessons chiseled out by the Omnipotent; grand, unbound systems of natural theology and commerce and international law for the study of the race; indices of universal history, mute prophets of the future. God made this country for a definite purpose and according to an immutable programme. These grand mountain systems on the Pacific coast, these valleys thick with alluvial fatness, these alkaline deserts and stupendous waterfalls and quiet harbors and gigantic forests were all made for man. Ignorant man criticises the Almighty, and sees only a fortuitous jumble—only chaos where exists the sublimest cosmos. Ignorance is the basis of all this fault-finding. Could man see as God sees, every mountain system and parched valley and dreary desert and ocean breeze would reverberate with thanksgiving and loud hallelujahs. Valleys are the homes of civilization. Geographical position has governed the empire of earth; commerce is born out of alluvial deposit, mineral

wealth, ocean breezes and magnificent harbors. Commerce centralizes population, breaks down the barriers of nationality, eliminates prejudice, and opens the way for the Gospel of the Son of God. Our physical geography is the prophecy and prelude of the final triumph of truth. God never made but one Sacramento. Neither the Amazon nor Danube, the Euphrates nor the Nile compares with the golden river of the great West. Our State is big with possibilities. Wherever is the metropolis of empire San Francisco is the gateway of commerce, the key to the Old World. The wealth of the Orient must pass through the Golden Gate. We have room enough for the ships of the world. Europe may struggle to divert the trade of the Old World to her own warehouses, but she cannot succeed. Her money power may hew out vast plans and dig channels for her commerce; but the lines of trade are settled in the foundation plans of the earth, the counsel of eternity made the programme for all the future. He who reigns over matter, and has given shape to earth, and formed the mountains and the seas, has written our future in characters more legible than the geologic tracings on the pre-Adamite rocks, and neither the Suez canal nor the Alps tunnel can change them. Europe may construct an Adriatic railway, and shorten the time from London to Alexandria, and connect Paris with Constantinople; Russia may fill the Black Sea with ships, and run her trains to the Caspian, and across the frontier to Northern China; but the Pacific must be blockaded and the trade-winds stopped from blowing before trade can be diverted from the Golden State.

The channels of commerce are cut by the Omnipotent, and no time, nor legislation, nor money can change them. Geography determines the courses of civilization; where business is transacted there the people congregate. An Oriental commerce will bring an Oriental population.

It is wisdom for the State to study Divine facts, and frame her constitution and construct her laws in harmony with the eternal law of God. No international law, or Burlingame treaty, or Congressional action, or political manipulation can defeat the purposes of Heaven, or stop the tide of immigration. As well legislate against the Gulf Stream as the immigration movement. The people will come—Chinese, Japanese and European—in obedience to an immutable law of supply and demand; they will come through the Golden Gate—the divinely prepared channel for the nations; they will crowd our cities, affect our civilization, change political parties; but the Lord reigns, and His kingdom will triumph.

Have you ever stood amid the depths of the old forest, and gazed upward out of some deep, wild canon at the lofty cliffs and hoary-headed mountains, and watched the beautiful cas-

cedes and dashing water in its foamy madness as it went hurrying to the sea?—or watched the gorgeous sunlight as it came creeping through the dark, tangled wildwood, and felt a strange, melancholy pleasure which no words can describe and no pencil can delineate? Have you ever touched one of those giants of the forest which Jehovah planted long centuries ago, while Hiram Abif was cutting down the cedars of Lebanon to build the temple, and felt that Solomon was *there*? Look at the Sierra Nevadas: what wild confusion, infinite contortion, amazing power—grandeur beyond language! Touch these infinities; put your hands into these scars of bygone ages! these curious marks of forgotten pasts; these are the monuments of the infinite, grander than the pyramids, the work of Him who lived before the mountains were brought forth: divine syllogisms from base to summit, with conclusions stretching into the eternities—touch them! what a thrill of sacredness! as keen as filled the heart of Israel at Sinai's base. What sublime ideas of God! There is no force in matter; mountains never lift themselves above the clouds. Jehovah made these monsters! He cutteth out the rivers among the rocks; He watereth the hills from His chambers—He reigns! The force that built the world and the power that governs it are one. Let the earth rejoice. Let all the people praise Thee.

He reigns over all mind. The events of history are as much under the control of God as the phenomena of nature. There is but one Supreme; to divide omnipotence is to destroy it. But mind cannot be governed by the same laws as matter. Mind is not controlled by material forces. Nations cannot be conducted by machinery; levers and pulleys cannot frame laws, nor can legislatures be run by steam.

Omnipotence cannot govern a single mind; not for the want of power, but because it is incompatible. If God could make men as easily as mountains, the man would fall to the same plane as matter. But mind is controlled by motives, not by force. Man is free. God is supreme. Are these truths reconcilable? This is the problem of all human history. At the point where freedom is interfered with responsibility ceases. There is a circle of human responsibility. Here man is as free as Jehovah. God never crosses this boundary. This is the impassable line between the finite and Infinite. Within this domain man does as he pleases, but is compelled to take the responsibility. Compulsion is an impossible element in the government of mind. Every act put forth by mind within the circumference of personal freedom is a free, self-originated power, ceaseless in its effects, and carries with it personal responsibility. But the moment it is finished it passes beyond the boundary of human freedom and human control: it becomes the property of the Master-mind of the universe, who controls all forces in

the interests of government. If a man, standing upon the brink of a precipice, intends to destroy his own life by dashing himself on the rocks below, God does not interfere with his freedom. He leaves him to his intelligence and conscience. But the moment he leaps, the act is beyond his control, and comes within the realm of government. If one nation fire upon the flag of another, before the trigger is touched the act is free and limited to the human; but the moment the powder explodes and the deed is finished, it passes beyond human control. The consequences move on forever, but under the direction of God, who may change the direction, counteract the influences by other forces, or permit the act to move forward without any interference, as may be best for the interests of the universe.

What is meant, then, by God governing mind is, that He exercises supreme control over the actions of men after they pass out of the domain of human freedom. God has nothing to do with war and politics and finance till they come within the realm of divine government. He has nothing to do with gunpowder and sword and suicide. Millions of wicked acts are put forth every day; mind forces, which make up so much of human history, to counteract, and so adjust these (for they are not destroyed) as best to protect the innocent and punish the guilty, and secure results for the highest good to the universe, is the work of the Supreme Ruler.

Mind is a greater mystery than matter. Hence, human history is more complex than the physical world. If man is perplexed over mountain systems and ocean currents and fossil rocks, no wonder he is perplexed at the revelations of nations and the dark, strange phenomena of mind. Heaven is doing its best to bring harmony out of confusion and happiness out of misery. If God could say to moral chaos, "Let there be light," it would be done; but virtue is not born by Almighty fiat. True, long-suffering, personal sacrifice are the only forces that can be applied to human freedom. All forces that enter into human history are reducible to three; Divine, human and Satanic. This is the Bible solution of the problem, and all events may be rationally accounted for by these agencies. Men get uneasy and long for the golden age. The saints in glory cry, "How long?" but the progress of this world is slow when estimated by railroad chronometers. But virtue is without velocity, and free mind cannot be forced into a trot. Crime and retribution, suffering and compensation are not always near neighbors. Justice often loans on long time, but sooner or later demands both principal and interest, and that compounded.

While the world must wait, there is constant progress; God never takes a step backward, never does His work a second time. Human history is moving toward the goal of perfec-

tion ; the wheels of His chariot are coming. No obstacle can prevent their forward motion ; perverse mind may put on the brakes, but can never produce a dead halt. Virtue can afford to wait and weep, for every groan of our down-trodden humanity, every sacrifice made for truth are on deposit in the great treasury of the future and drawing interest. The tears of the heart, the deeds of kindness and self-sacrifice are not lost. They form the woof and warp in the web of Time, woven together by the mystic shuttle of the Unseen into the richest fabrics with which to clothe the coming generations. Earth's saddest notes, when arranged on the celestial scale, are grander than the music of the spheres. We cannot divine the future, but sin has dug the grave of all the buried past, and the tombs of the dead are the way-stations of progress. **THE LORD REIGNS!**

The Popular Arguments against Endless Punishment Unsatisfactory as a Sure Ground of Hope.

A SERMON

PREACHED BY R. S. Dabney, D.D., LL.D., PROF. OF SYSTEMATIC AND POLEMIC THEOLOGY IN THE UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF VIRGINIA.

Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden. . . . And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die.—Genesis iii : 1 and 4.

With a heart which craves to sin, a plausible doubt counts for much more than it is worth. If men listened to reason, they would no more brave a chance than a certainty of a useless danger or loss. This should be our decision as to a life of sin, unless we can certainly demonstrate that there is neither judgment, nor heaven, nor hell. There is no man who will deliberately say that a life of piety and purity detracts, on the whole, from our earthly well-being or honor. As long, then, as there is a possibility of future retribution for a life of sin, to choose such a life is as gratuitous a folly as though the transgressor saw the future punishment before him. But to this reasonable conclusion the sinful heart refuses to listen. It seizes on the imagined doubt and magnifies it into a shield of impurity. Satan understood this weakness of human nature. Hence, he began his seduction of our first parents by suggesting a doubt (v. 1), and then irrationally leaps to a denial (v. 4). He trusted to the force of temptation on the heart to make his victims follow him blindly across this chasm of evidence.

The very same process is now taking place in a multitude of souls throughout Protestant Christendom, and, it is not unnatural to suppose, at the prompting of the same tempter. The death denounced against the first transgression was not so much bodily as spiritual—the death of the soul rather than of the body; so that the doubt raised by Satan's first question is substantially the same with that which is now enticing the minds of sinful men. Hath God said that final impenitence in transgression shall be followed by everlasting death? May we venture to doubt this? Such is the question by which men are now really deceiving their own hearts. They strive to see at least plausibility in the pleas of those who deny—an easy task for a heart yearning after license in sin! And when this stage is reached, they then proceed to cast away restraint, just as though they had certainly proved that there is no hell,

Let but the head decide that *it is questionable* whether God hath said so, and the heart rushes to the practical conclusion, "Ye shall not surely die."

One mode by which men sometimes find a pretext for rejecting the solemn truth is to get up a species of resentment against what, they say, is the temper of Christians in testifying to it. They charge that our severity and harsh dogmatism cause us to take a cruel delight in asserting terrible dogmas. They even claim to enlist all the benevolence and amiability on the side of the skeptical position. Now, to this I reply that I have no dogma whatever to assert at this time. It is impossible that I can have any interest in asserting unnecessarily that the second death waits on sin, for I am a sinner myself. The judgments of God are just as formidable to me as to you, my unbelieving brethren. I have no more ability to endure them, or to escape their condemnation, than you. Could I be so insane as to dig out a hell, of set purpose, in the spirit of bigotry, into which I know I am as certain of falling as you, except as I have a hope of deliverance through the sacrifice of Christ? Sure I am that if hell can be disproved in any way that is solid and true and consistent with God's honor and man's good, there is not a trembling sinner in this land that would hail the demonstration with more joy than I would. Can any of you give that demonstration? Let us see it. Let us see whether it will answer as a foundation on which I may venture an immortal soul. I repeat, I have no counter proof, at this time, to advance. My only purpose is to show you how I have endeavored to find some footing in the sentiments on which the doubters seem to build, and how the footing has utterly failed *me*. I have painfully studied the speculative logic and the wire-drawn criticisms by which what seems to be the plain declaration of Scripture is impugned, and have found nothing there but a pavement of mist. It is not with these I would deal now. I have placed myself in sympathy with the more practical sentiments which I perceive infecting or swaying the minds around me. I have felt them with all the force which the interests of a common guilt and a common dread could give. But I wish to tell you simply the results to which my sinful soul has been unwillingly forced as to these so influential sentiments; and I would show you how baseless they are as foundations of any solid hope that sinners shall not surely die.

I. Men are, after all, much more influenced by feelings than by analytic reasonings. Here is one sentiment, which is doubtless doing its work with all to hide the formidable side of this question from our minds. There is great comfort in numbers. Man is a social being. He is largely governed by the example of those nearest to him; and it is easy and grateful to

our indolence to imitate and to save ourselves mental effort by thinking as the multitude thinks. When we see the vast majority advancing with gayety and confidence in the path our hearts crave to follow, we seem to have all that mass between us and the peril; and we are incredulous that death can consume all this affluence of life in order to get to us. Now, when we set this doctrine in contrast with the actual feelings and conduct of the world, we see that everybody is evidently acting as though the doctrine of a hell could not be true. If the world thought it certainly true—nay, if there were but a probability it might be found true, then the simplest child can see how all the sinful world ought to act. Every sinner should ask: Is it so that I am condemned already, except I repent and find deliverance by faith? That this sentence is the everlasting curse of the Almighty? That it is to fill my soul and body with intolerable torments? That hope is to depart for ever and ever, and eternal despair is to gather up the infinite aggregate of future woe, and in every conscious instant crush my soul with the tremendous prospect? That all this is to go on and on, parallel with the eternity of God; and that between me and this death there may be but the step between health and sickness, or present security and sudden accident? Is this my peril? "Horrible! oh, horrible!" Then what time have I for pleasure? what business with the riches which perish in the using? I ought "to say of laughter, It is mad; and of mirth, What doeth it?" Everything except the one means of escape from this infinite woe ought to be loathsome for its frivolity. I ought to have time for nothing but prayer: every breath ought to be a cry, and tears ought to be my drink until the mercy of Christ pluck me from the awful verge. Thus ought every sinner to agonize. Who can gainsay it? And this wide world ought to be a Bochim.

But what do we see? The world eats and drinks, marries and gives in marriage, pursues riches, earthly pleasure, yea, seeks to "kill time" as though it had too much of it; sings and dances and fills its atmosphere either with jest and laughter or with new insults to this awful Judge—in a word, studies to act precisely as though it were certain there is no hell. Now, has all the world gone insane? Is all the keen sagacity which we meet everywhere in its worldly pursuits and rivalries clean turned into madness? So it would seem, if this doctrine of a hell were true! But it is hard for a denizen of this world to conclude thus of his own kind, as well as of himself; and therefore the practical feeling of doubt comes, like a penetrating tide, into the soul that somehow the ghastly dogma cannot hold. Who has not felt the seductive influence, not reasoned out perhaps, possibly only semi-conscious, yet seducing the soul back from the rough, harsh warning of conscience into luxurious relief by the plea, "Ye shall not surely die."

But, my friends, there was one discovery which, so soon as my unwilling reason was constrained to look at it, dashed all the ease and solace which my deceitful heart was drawing from the sentiment. I was compelled to see that if the Bible is true, and man's nature what my own observation evinces, the pleasing inference has only a foundation of clouds. Suppose, as the Bible says, it is the nature of the sin which imperils to produce this very insensibility? Suppose that warning should be sober truth, which tells us to beware of "being hardened by the deceitfulness of sin," so that it is literally true: that "madness is in men's hearts while they live"; and that this dense callousness is itself one of the surest symptoms of the reality of the disease? If I were to find a freezing man in the snow, and he were to answer my rousing appeal by the assurance that he was suffering no evil, and needed nothing except the balmy sleep to which he wished to resign himself, I should understand well that this ease was but the symptom of approaching death. So, if this spiritual torpor of the world may perchance be only the indication of the approaching frosts of spiritual death, then plainly it is madness for us to argue safety from it. The Bible represents also that this numbing and deluding quality of sin is one of the very features which has caused a God, at once all-wise, just and benevolent, to estimate it as so immense an evil, and has constrained Him to adopt means so stern for curbing it. Can this be true? Can you or I refute it? And when we turn to our own observations, do we see that in fact human experience does contain frequent monitions of a solemnity and dreadful awe precisely appropriate to these revealed facts; that God does indeed, from time to time, lift a corner of the veil which mercifully hides the pit of despair, and makes men hear in anticipation the wails of its torment in the cries of guilty death-beds, the catastrophes of dying nations, the ghastly ravages of plague and war, and that men refuse to hearken and strive to forget the salutary warning? Then we have before our eyes the proof that *sin can make a world as mad, as insane*, as we saw the argument of the Bible implied. Alas, yes! we see men all around us, under parallel influences of deceitful lusts, shut their eyes to known and experimental dangers. We see the drunkard madly jesting of his "pleasure and jollity," when every worldly wise man except himself sees *delirium tremens* grinning over his shoulder. We see even woman, intoxicated with flattery, rushing into the snaky coils of the seducer, while every one but she perceives nothing but the envenomed fang that is to poison her soul. Yes, they go "as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life." With this solution assigned by Scripture for men's insensibility in spiritual danger, and this stubborn confirmation of its reasonable-

ness in my own experience, I can no longer find any solace or hope in the blindness of the world to its own destiny and duty. It only enhances the fearful picture, and its perverse example adds a formidable obstacle to all the others which exist between me and my safety.

II. Another plausible but most practicable element of doubt arises from the example and deportment of professed Christians. How should they act for themselves, they who profess to have the vision of faith, if they saw the doctrine certainly true? The hope of deliverance they already have in Christ might indeed exempt them from the anguish which should fill the souls of the guilty and condemned; yet should they feel that they had a race to run with perdition to make good their exemption. To this every power of their souls should be bent every hour of every day, like the muscles of a racer upon the course. Is not this what their Bibles enjoin? Should they not say to themselves:

"Be this my one great business here—
With holy trembling, holy fear,
To make my calling sure"?

"And what should be their demeanor toward us sinners?" doubting men may ask. "Do they indeed know that we are 'condemned already,' and that but a few uncertain years or days divide us from that unutterable hell? Do they see us insanely wasting (as they judge) our fleeting opportunity, and trifling on the brink of so unspeakable a fate? With what a visage, then, should they not meet us! Tears ought to break forth at the sight of us, as one would weep at sight of a felon on his way to the gallows; every cheek ought to turn pale at our meeting, and there ought to be no time nor heart for anything but 'entreating us night and day with tears' to flee from the wrath to come! Surely this would be but the natural behavior for them. But what do we actually see? We spend days and months with these believers in future endless torments, and the time is all filled up with worldly jest or worldly aims; they pursue what we pursue, and apparently live for what we live for. They jostle us at every turn in our eager race for this world's honors and pleasures. They seem to have neither thought nor care for our approaching misery. What, now, are we to conclude? That these kind, cordial, jovial friends and brothers of ours, who are so generous in relieving our little earthly evils, are harder than the millstone, and more cruelly indifferent than a wild beast to our immense and certain misery? This, surely, is a harsh conclusion! Must we not rather conclude that these good, kind, believing people, who have the faith and know what is true, have discovered that sinners 'do not surely die'; that their dreadful creed is somehow a pious fiction, and the warnings of their preachers are not

expected to find a reception in their literal sense?" Such is the doubt as it forms itself in the private thought of many a transgressor, or as it flows, unformed but influential, in their unreasoning feelings. Alas, that Christians should give so much ground for this doubt! Alas, that the most plausible and influential argument that contradicts the warnings of God should be the drowsy example of His professed people! Alas, for the blood of souls, which will be found partly in our skirts, in the day when God shall call these doubters to their account! Forgive, O Christ, this unnatural contradiction, and deliver us from the woe which is denounced on "those by whom the offence cometh." Forgive us, ye deceived souls, for the mischief we have done you in thus assisting you to drug your own consciences. And we beseech you, believe us not, trust us not, for we are verily unworthy to guide you. But now let me tell you, doubters, the reasons why I have been compelled to conclude that this inconsistent example of professed believers furnished me no ground of confidence whatever that I should not surely die by my sins. I found that I could not trust to it one instant: *First*, because I saw that it was every way likely, probable and natural that the faith of weak Christians should be benumbed by that same "deceitfulness of sin" which we have found deluding the unbelievers into an insane rashness. This Bible of theirs, the same Bible which tells of the hell we are so unwilling to admit, explained that spectacle of the weak Christian forgetting his own faith; explained it with a consistency so clear that it made the rising hope of security in sin die within me. It told of indwelling sin. And as I replied, How wrong, how perverse, that sin should still work, and work inconsistencies so glaring in quickened souls, it rejoined: Well, you have there but another and a more formidable illustration of the malignity of sin, that it can thus poison and mislead the hearts even of those in whom the Holy Ghost dwells! We read lately in the journals of French workmen in a deep pit who fell stupefied by the foul air, and while in momentary danger of death, were already as helpless as corpses. But as we learned further how the healthy men who descended to their rescue also became stupid, and staggered and fell, we shuddered more than at first at the malignancy of that poison. Suppose that God may take this view of sin in Christians and of the guilty callousness it produces: I can see nothing there but another reason why He should hate it the more, and should judge the sternest measures proper in order to curb it.

But *second*: I saw upon closer inspection that the sorry, common sorts of believers were less callous to my danger than I had supposed. I found they often rebuked themselves for that timidity which had shrunk from warning me to flee from wrath. I discovered a cause, a cause not unnatural, which kept

them silent, even when yearning to speak some word of awakening; and that was my own observed callousness. They knew that I knew my peril, and yet saw me reckless. They heard the most solemn admonitions of the pulpit launched at me, pointed with all the human force which study, preparation and burning earnestness could give; but they fell from my heart blunted as by a shield of adamant. It was, if not right, yet how natural for them to say in their discouragement: "What can we do? Our words will be yet more vain!" Thus I discovered that they limited their efforts to prayer for me in secret. Yes: not seldom after an interview, when all their converse with me had seemed of the earth earthy, they went away and prayed in secret that my eyes might be opened. Thus I found that, after all, I had much over-estimated their apparent callousness to the fearful truth.

Then, *third*: I could not but observe that there was a difference among these Christians. Some compelled much more of my respect by the honest consistency of their lives. And I always found that, just in proportion to this, these few did approach that mode of living and striving which their solemn creed demanded. They obviously were "working out their own salvation with fear and trembling"; they did meet me and greet me with the aspect of tearful and solemn concern; and they did not forget to warn me of the coming wrath, even with a fidelity which was irksome and offensive. Thus, wherever I extended my observation, I found that just in proportion as the Christian's integrity of life commanded my respect and confidence, that life was most nearly squared upon the theory that hell is real! A Paul, for instance: that apostle whose sturdy heroism inspired even my dead heart with a thrill of moral admiration; who had seen invisible glories and heard words which it was not lawful to utter, braved seas, and robbers, and prisons, and scourges, and deaths that he might "warn every one night and day with tears." Thus I was forced to say to myself: How absurd to put my chief trust touching this momentous question to the very kind of Christians for whom I have scarcely enough respect to confide in them in an ordinary bargain! If I am to derive any inference as to the question, whether I must surely die for my sin, it is the men I respect most whom I had better regard, distasteful as is their solemn conviction.

But, once more, there has been one Man on earth who was of all others best qualified to judge of the urgency of a sinner's condition on earth and the degree of his danger; and of all the beings who have ever lived among men, was the truest, the most disinterested and the wisest. He knew the real state of the case, for He came from the other world, and thus had the advantage of the perfect knowledge of an eye-witness. This

was the man Jesus. And He is the one Being who has literally lived and preached and toiled up to the full standard of that zeal and devotion demanded by the claims of eternity. Let any one look at Him, and infer from His proceedings what was His sense of the case. The one aim of His life was "to seek and to save that which was lost." To this every power and every day was devoted with a zeal so intense that His worldly relatives said, "He is beside Himself"; and His disciples beheld in His burning career a fulfilment of the prophecy: "The zeal of thy house hath eaten Him up." Laborious days of teaching were followed by whole nights of prayer. Not one hour did He ever divert to the pursuits of His business or ambition or pleasure; and after a ministry of superhuman energy, He submitted His life itself to a cruel sacrifice for the redemption of your souls from the fate whose infinite bitterness He alone could appreciate. Here, then, is the safest example from which to infer the real truth, whether we shall surely die for our sins. Jesus must have felt that hell was real; for there is no other solution of His career.

III. Again, some who pretend to speculate more profoundly argue that the eternal ruin of sinners is inconsistent with the appearances of things which Providence Himself has instituted. "The order which He has impressed on this earth and our mortal life is not such as a wise and consistent God would have selected, if our race were, indeed, moving to such a fate." And here, say they, we argue, not from the actions or feelings of our fellow-men, who may mistake, but of the Sovereign Judge Himself. "Consider, then," say they, "what the aspect of this world should be if this dogma of an endless hell were true. Take in all the consequences which are involved, in all their horror. That all, all the thronging millions, who compose our generation, except the few consistent Christians, are going straight down to that tremendous doom, one single instance of which, if properly conceived, should be enough to make a world stand aghast. That all the successive generations which fill the centuries are born only to inherit this fate, save so far as the tardy efforts of this delinquent Church may rescue a few. That mortal life is then, in most men, but an unutterable curse! But, if all this is literal, what is this earth but a charnel-house of dead souls; a yawning gateway through which men may be borne into hell! Would God ever have put it into man's better nature to rejoice in the birth of children, or have said, 'Blessed is he that hath his quiver full' of these arrows of the strong man, if our paternity only avails thus, in most cases, to multiply the instances of immortal ruin and woe? In what scenery of woe should not such a world have been draped? It should be like the condemned ship, which floats away in the dark night, with its black flag, freighted with its load of crime and despair, to the

solitary ocean. Its atmosphere should be darkness visible, its sole occupation the wailing agony of entreaty. The globe itself should blot the sky with its disk, and be followed as it rolls in its orbit by a dirge of pitying angels, while its fair sister spheres should veil their light at its approach, even as a tender woman would cover her face from the sickening horrors of the scaffold. Such should God have made the home of a race who 'were by nature children of wrath.' But what has He made it? Behold its light and beauty and beneficence! Lo! its scenery is gilded with sunlight and overarched with azure. 'He sendeth the springs into the valleys which run among the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field. By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches. He watereth the hills from His chambers; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of His works. He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man, that he may bring forth food out of the earth; and wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart.' And throughout this beautiful earth 'He setteth the solitary in families'; He invites man to hope and joy by social sympathies, and teaches the mother's heart to sing for joy that a man is born into the world. Do not nature and Providence, then, refute this gloomy and saturnine view of man's destiny?"

Glad should I be, my hearers, to read the appearances around us thus; but, alas! there is another side of the picture which must be viewed. This earth is full of blessing? Yes; but it is like the vale between Ebal and Gerizim: the curses are over against the blessings. Gloomy night answers to day, tempest to calm, freezing winter to teeming summer, desert to fruitful field; the poison grows beside the flower and the fruit, and death waits on life—that death which is to every heart the monster-evil. And when man has viewed the whole scene, and tasted all that earth can give, his reluctant testimony is, "Vanity of vanities"! Nor are all the aspects of Providence smiling! Turn your eyes to the darker scenes, which fill all the larger pages of history, where human crimes and divine retributions have made this sinful earth an Aceldama. Harken to the scream of the oppressed upon the rack! Hear the roar of battle, the crash of falling cities, the wail of ruined nations! Does not our earth, after all, sometimes seem dark enough to be indeed the vestibule of hell? And when we examine more narrowly the conditions of man's existence here, we find the same strict doctrines evidently applied on earth which underlie the future retributions: that man is required to fulfil a probation for his own welfare, under responsibilities to comply carefully with the conditions prescribed him, or else receive from the course of nature itself a stern and inexorable recompense. Does outraged Na-

ture, when the time has come for her to pronounce her final doom on the glutton, the drunkard, the debauchee, hold her hand, or hearken to entreaty? Alas, no! she shows herself as inexorable as the darkest dogma of the Calvinist.

How, then, shall this strange mixture of good and evil, this seemingly capricious juncture of mercy and wrath, be explained? The only solution I know is the one which Scripture proposes. It is this: That had man's doom been immediate and absolute, like that of the fallen angels, then the world, which is his home, would have been unvisited by one ray of mercy or light. But because the seed of the woman was appointed to bruise the serpent's head; because God would first offer man atonement, through the death of His own Son, before He shuts him up in death, therefore it is that He has made us for the time "prisoners of hope," and adorned our prison with all these alleviations in order that they might allure us to the footstool of gospel-mercy. "Account that the long-suffering of our God is salvation."—2 Peter iii: 15. "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance."—Rom. ii: 4. "He left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."—Acts xiv: 17. Thus every terrestrial blessing, from the daily food which refreshes the hunger of an hour up to the children which fill your homes with love, is a voice to remind you of that amazing sacrifice of infinite love to which God was moved by His infallible knowledge of the depth of your everlasting doom, and to woo you to flee to this city of refuge before it is too late. This is God's explanation of His earthly dispensation of good and evil to man. Does it furnish any solace to that man who is resolved to slight the only atonement? Surely there could be no mistake so tragical and so perverse as that which wrests this ministry of mercy into an argument for contumacy. Here is a state prisoner, accused, tried, condemned, locked up, awaiting his condign punishment. But because the king and the king's son have so thorough an apprehension of the horror of that fate which justice will inflict, therefore they cast about for some way of escape, whereby "righteousness and peace may kiss each other." It is found at length in this amazing plan: that the king's son shall drink the cup of death in his stead. So, to prepare the way for the message of this ransom, the gloom of the condemned cell is lighted with the sun; the fetters of the doomed man are relaxed; he is fed with dainties from the king's own table; and the cheering voices of hope penetrate his despair, inviting him to reconciliation through the son. But now the perverse wretch begins to abuse the very overtures of mercy, to argue that his sentence was not just, and the king knew it and never dared to execute it; that all this doom and threat-

ened destruction had been only an unsavory jest. To that man "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation." His unbelief, by a dreadful alchemy, converts every fleeting blessing into an abiding curse, and stores it in the treasury of wrath against the day of wrath.

There is no safe footing here, then, for a doubt whether "we must surely die" if out of Christ. The Bible explanation of the mercies sinners experience is too consistent; to the gospel-despiser too terribly consistent and reasonable. And in the light of that explanation every earthly mercy has a voice which, even in its sweetest accents, implies that there is a hell as it cries, "Turn ye to the stronghold, prisoners of hope."

IV. But some, driven from God's providence, resort to His character for arguments to sustain the doubt as to His purpose to punish forever. They ask whether the justice, wisdom and goodness of God will not forbid His forever destroying a being whom He has Himself formed for happiness. Men ask, for instance, How can it be just in God to punish a puny creature eternally for a sin committed in this short life? They claim it as almost a self-evident truth that temporal punishment is sufficient for temporal sin. Now, I might dwell upon several thoughts which have presented themselves to my mind neutralizing the probability of this position. I was reminded, for instance, that neither the course of nature nor human law measures its penalties by the length of time consumed in the transgression. But sometimes the recklessness of a moment incurs a result, from the laws of nature, which fixes calamity and pain on the whole future life; and a murder, which it required a few moments to perpetrate, is justly punished with an everlasting banishment from this life and all its benefits. One cannot but think, again, how the estimate of his sins may be affected by the infinite glory and majesty of the Being at whom they are aimed. If the youth who strikes his own parent, for instance, is justly held far more guilty than the common brawler, how high may not the aggravations of our guilt against the Universal Father rise? But our very sinfulness and unbelief unfit us to weigh this element of our case fairly. We cannot rise to the impartial estimation of God's exalted rights and honor; we are too selfish and blind. Look, then, at another thought. None but atheists are so insolent as to deny that temporal sins deserve temporal punishment. Suppose, now, that you should *continue sinners after death, while paying off the score* of your earthly transgressions? Why not? Yes; *why not?* Because you will then be suffering punishment? We do not see that God's chastisements of you in this world have had any tendency as yet to make you any better: why should you count on them to make you better there? Or be-

cause your habits and evil principles will then be so confirmed by a life of sin? Which is easier to bend, a twig, or a tree? Or because the company of hell will be so edifying or improving to your heart? Hardly! Take, then, one sober, honest look at yourself, and answer me, what is the likelihood that you, who are an obstinate sinner now, will not be a sinner then? You, whose resolutions of repentance have hitherto been so absolutely worthless; you who cannot be in the least restrained from your sins by the near prospect of a retribution so heavy that you are now murmuring at its weight? But should the prediction of Scripture prove true, that he who is unjust now will be unjust still, and he who is filthy now will be filthy still; and should you be heaping up a second mountain of transgressions while you are paying your debt for the first, when will you ever finish? There is the question which ruins all your hope. Be God's justice what it may, obviously no reasonable being, who has once resolved to curb rebellion by penalty, can consistently stop punishing until the criminal stops rebelling. To do so before would be impotent child's-play. But after you have on this earth rejected Christ, who is to help you to cease rebelling? Who is to intercede for you with the avenging Judge to hold His hand? I see not where your hope is to hang.

"But God is supremely wise and kind!" How do you know He is? From the Bible? The same Bible that tells me, "God is love," tells me that He "turns the wicked into hell, with all the nations that forget God."—Ps. ix: 17. Which side of this statement must we take? And if we reject either, then the Bible ceases to be of authority with you for both: it no longer authorizes us to say God is love. Or will you turn from it to God's works, and plead that "the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord"?—Ps. xxxiii: 5. When we look there, we "behold both the goodness and severity of God"—Rom. xi: 22; death set over against life; calamity against blessings; war against peace; sickness and pain against health; "distress of nations and perplexity" against perplexity. And when you bid me infer that God's wisdom and goodness forbid His destroying forever even a guilty creature, whom He Himself formed for immortal happiness, then I know that we have both gone far beyond our depth. Who can find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is higher than heaven; what canst thou do? It is deeper than hell; what canst thou know? Look around; and so far as your earthly wisdom can read His dispensations, do you not see Him daily permitting the most ardent aspirations of your fellows to end in vanity, despair and death? Do you not see Him permitting millions of young infants, in whom He had implanted the seeds of reason, and love, and happiness, and beneficent action, die like the bud-

ding flower that drops from the tree with its undeveloped germ to rot on the ground? How is that? Do we not see Him rain on the salt, barren ocean and the unpeopled deserts, while the vales on which the children of men hope for their daily bread, and whose clods they have watered with their sweat, shrivel for drought? How many men, judging by earthly reason, have ever been content to die as satisfied with the results of their life? The one thing, the only thing that is certain to us all is, that we must die; and so far as earthly wisdom can see, "How dieth the wise man? Even as the fool dieth!" Thus, when I see this awful God stamp "vanity and vexation of spirit" on all the hopes of man, I cannot undertake to decide what awful severities on the guilty He may not purpose to execute in another world. He has worlds under His government. His purposes span eternity. "Clouds and darkness are round about Him; but justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne."—Ps. xcvi: 2. Feeble man, we are out of our depth! There is here no standing ground for any hope. Let us then go back, and hear what message the Lord Himself hath been pleased to send us out of His Word. And when we look there, the most striking fact is, that the clearest, the most dreadful declarations of the eternity of the unbeliever's ruin are those uttered by Jesus. Men sometimes babble of a difference, even a contrast, between the theology of Paul and of his Master. They talk of Paul as the austere logician, excogitating a rigid system of dogmas; they prefer, they say, to turn to the teachings of the "meek and lowly Jesus," whose theology is that of love. Well, one thing do we know: never was there love like unto His love! It surpassed the love of woman. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." He laid down His for enemies! No man can see one trait of cruelty in this Jesus; for His life was a ministration of kindness, not to the deserving, but to the "publican and sinner." Never did the cry of human woe strike His ear in vain; never did human anguish appeal in vain to His soul while on earth. And He knew, also, the real facts; for He came from the world of spirits and thither He went back. How comes it, then, that this meek and loving Jesus uttered His warnings against hell, in words sevenfold more frequent and solemn than the "austere" Paul? Is this also done in love? Yes; the beauty of His beneficent life and death permits us to think nothing else. If, then, it is the tenderest heart in the universe which comes out to us most fearfully, "Beware of the pit!" what shall we think? Is it because He who knows best, and loves us best, is most fully informed of its inevitable certainty and its intolerable pains? Hear this Divine Pity, then—Mark ix: 43, 44; Matt. xviii: 34, xlii: 41, 42, xxv: 30-46; Luke xvi: 23-26; Rev. vi: 16, 17.

What, then, is the part of reason for you? As I said at the outset, I have no dogma to advance. I have no interest in arguing that there is an everlasting hell for impenitent sinners. If any man can prove that there certainly is none, by any evidence honorable for God and safe for man, sure I am that no man's soul will be more rejoiced than my sinful heart. I have but one parting word to utter, and that is so plainly just that it needs no argument. It will be well for you to *look thoroughly* into this doubt before you trust yourself to it. Your eternity is at stake! And if, after your faithful, honest and exhaustive examination, you are constrained to feel that there is a possibility that Jesus may be right and Satan wrong on this point, it will be best for you to come with me to the safe side, and hide under the sacrifice of Christ.

The Breathings of the Pit; or, Robert Ingersoll on his Perilous Journey.

A SERMON

PREACHED BY Justin D. Fulton, D.D.

Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of my hand: ye shall lie down in sorrow.—Is. 1:11.

The inspired man of God, standing on his mount of vision, described in language which cannot be misunderstood the perilous journey and the certain doom of the infidel. Over and against him is the man who fears God. He has comfort in reviewing his life. With rejoicing he can declare, "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary; He wakeneth morning by morning; He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned. The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away my back. I gave my back to the smiters and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. I hid not my face from shame and spitting. For the Lord God will help me, therefore shall I not be confounded; therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed." These words are full of meaning. They embody the experience of every true believer. They enable him to ask with absolute confidence, "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God."

THERE IS ANOTHER SIDE.

There are those who make light of a faith in God. They treat it as superstition, and speak of it as if it were a relic of the dark ages. They scorn the fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel's veins, and prefer to hew out for themselves cisterns, which they name reservoirs of hope. They refuse to sacrifice "a real world that they have, for one they know not of." They call believing in Christ enslavement, and refer to the light of Christianity as "the darkness of barbarism," which filled the future with heavens and with hells, with "the shining peaks of selfish joy, and the lurid abysses of flame." To such God says: "Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks; walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks ye have kindled." The opposer, the rebellious, the despiser, may go on. The fire kindled is

short-lived. The sparks by which he surrounds himself shall yield but a momentary glow, and "this shall ye have at my hand: ye shall lie down in sorrow."

An indescribable anguish has possession of many hearts. The fires are being kindled, and the young, the intellectual, the enterprising are surrounding themselves with sparks. They are in peril. They believe it not. For weeks and months literature, the newspapers, the speech of men, of households and of society have been full of the breathings of the pit which have distinguished the utterances of a man who suddenly sprang into national recognition, won fame as an orator, attained influence in the nation, and then revealed a hatred toward God and religion which shocked the moral sense of the community. Never since Absalom broke away from restraint and led Israel in a wild revolt against parental rule has society been more surprised. The man seems bent on ruin. That cry of David, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom; would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son," expresses the sentiment that claims attention whenever thought is turned towards Robert G. Ingersoll, the son of a Presbyterian minister, who was reared with the greatest care, and in the midst of the mighty manifestations of God's power in the home, in the church where he worshiped, and in the community where he resided. This man is now playing the rôle of the prodigal son. He has not yet come to himself. His way leadeth to destruction. He is casting contempt upon the fame of his father, and upon the mother who carried him to the throne of grace day after day in the arms of believing faith. His father was a man of power. He preached as an evangelist in various portions of the country, and served churches as pastor. It is related of him that he preached a sermon from the text "God is love," and that as a result one hundred souls were born into the kingdom. The prayers of these parents are registered in heaven. Let not Christians despair. Ingersoll's blasphemy and vileness are products of sin. He refuses to honor his father, but says instead, "I have no respect for any human being who believes in hell. I have no respect for any man who preaches it." Well did David say: "Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? The goodness of God endureth continually. Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs, like a sharp razor working deceitfully. Thou lovest evil more than good, and lying rather than to speak righteousness. God shall likewise destroy thee for ever; He shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling-place, and root thee out of the land of the living." The righteous also shall see and fear, and shall say of him: "Lo! this is the man that made not God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness."

THE SECRETS OF THIS LIFE

we may not know. Would that I could feel that the Church was not in any wise to blame. The boy was reared amid the briers of Brierwood Parish. He saw poverty as only ministers' children see it, and drank from the cup of sorrow as only ministers' children drink from it. Something has hardened and maddened him. His chastening has not yet yielded the peaceable fruits of righteousness. At times, as I have read his words, which reveal so much of bitter hatred towards God, it has seemed to me I could hear the voice that sounded in the ear of another strong hater: "Why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the goad." Submission to God's will and rule brings peace. Opposition, irreconciliation brings want, disquiet and discomfort. Gladly were it proper would I express the hope that ever and anon arises in my heart, which brings me into sympathy with a Saviour's love, and perhaps with a Saviour's expectation. Imagine our Lord's happiness when Saul cried out, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" No matter how this poor man reviles and attacks the faith that gave cheer and comfort to those who bore him, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ loves him. Would that it were mine to reach the ear of his soul, and touch the heart so steeled against God. I would turn the face toward him who died for him, and who looks on his attempt to stifle conviction with supreme pity, still crying, "Father, forgive him, for he knows not what he is doing." He sees not the pit-falls in the way, nor the perils which thicken in the air; he breathes out hate when love should inspire him; he has the scent of the vulture and the appetite of the hyena, and prowls among the dead and damned, finding there companionship and subjects of admiration. It is impossible to contemplate such a ruin without experiencing emotions of sorrow which baffle the powers of description. Let the grace of God be welcomed, and this man, rushing blindly on to the thick bosses of Jehovah's buckler would be changed. The might of wing which distinguishes the eagle as he battles with the storm-cloud and rides triumphantly on despite the tempest would be used to carry tidings of salvation to the lost. The terrible nature that challenges public opinion and tramples on all the finer feelings of the Christian heart would be converted to the uses of religion. This is not idle dreaming. It is history. There are better uses for man on earth than to contend against God and uproot and destroy all the tendrils of love, of service, of beneficence. There are better uses for men in the next world than to consign them to eternal woe. Do you want proof of it? Then look to Calvary. What signifies those three crosses on the hill-side? Two are for malefactors. One is for the innocent Christ. Why is He there? That is His place. He came to

stand among the lost, to live among them, to die among them, as well as to die for them. He is here beside this terrible blasphemer. He loves him with an eternal love. Do you want proof of the might of Divine grace and of its mission? Look toward Damascus. There goes a man as much worse than Ingersoll as he is mightier in philosophy, more skilled in learning and wilder in fanaticism. He, too, hates our Lord, and has no respect for any human being that loves Him. He is notorious in Jerusalem, and is the dread of the followers of the Nazarene. He gazes on Stephen as his face shines in the light of the throne. He hears his prayer. He marks the words, "*Lay not this sin to their charge.*" They were a new revelation to him. They resembled the ship on which Columbus rode when first seen by the red man of the forest. They told of an unexplored sea—an unexplored sea of love. They told of a land beyond the present, that rose in dim outline before the vision of the martyr, that impressed the man of Tarsus with a new conviction. The arrow had pierced the heart of the king's enemy. It rankled there. The light of God shone round about him. He fell prostrate before the Crucified, and cried: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Then God spoke peace to him. The machinery of an immortal soul was reversed. The man pushing on to ruin turned toward the possibilities of a higher life, and became the apostle to the Gentiles.

Adoniram Judson was at one time apparently lost to hope. He, too, was the son of a minister. Prayers and tears were apparently wasted on him. He was in a hotel. Beyond the thin partition was a sinner dying. All night long the moans and death-throes disturbed his sleep. The next morning, on inquiry, he found that the young man was dead. He followed his lost spirit on its terrible journey. He was convicted and converted, and became the pioneer missionary to Burmah, winning the distinction of being Jesus Christ's man.

HOPE ON.

It has been remarked how near each other in their original fountains are the streams of belief and unbelief; like rivers whose sources are seen by one poised condor, and whose mouths are divided by a continent. One man receives Jesus Christ as Saviour and as Ruler, and is saved. Another as favorably situated rejects Him, and is lost. They walk the same paths, attend oftentimes the same church, live under the same roof. One believes in Christ, and comes into the fellowship of eternal love; his path grows brighter and brighter as the years run on, and, like the day star that precedes the day, is changed into the brightness of the morning and so lost from sight. The other disbelieves, and goes blindly and madly down the steep places

of impiety. Could we uncover Ingersoll's past, we should see him at a family altar, his hand held in his mother's grasp, while his father wrestled like Jacob of old. He stood by the line dividing heaven and hell. He might have crossed. He stops. Satan takes possession, and the boy becomes this crazed blasphemer. Give him not up. Augustine was worse than he, and yet his mother clung to him, and was permitted to wear her son's soul as a star in the crown of her rejoicing. Well do I remember the early career of James Inglis, one of the saintliest of men afterward. He came to the town where his classmate was preaching a terribly dissipated infidel. Prayers went up for him. Never can I forget his looks and the looks of his companions when the proud reviler bowed at the foot of the throne and called on Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit to take possession of his immortal soul. Nothing is too hard for God. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

No longer can we continue to delight ourselves with the radiance of hope. Our duty compels us to describe the perilous journey that lies before this man of sin.

More than twenty-five centuries have gone since Isaiah portrayed his doom. Opposition to God is as old as sin. It began before Adam, before Eden, when Satan lead off his revolt in heaven and compelled God to locate hell as the prison-house of the damned. There is nothing new in Ingersoll's impeachment of God. This opposition has assumed different forms, but it has been characterized by the same purpose. In the days of the apostles fire and sword served as arguments. A century passes, and then men began to wield the pen in defense of heathenism. The carnal heart at enmity with God loved sin, and lavished upon its debasing forms of wickedness its wildest admiration. At the foot of the cross Cæsar was preferred to Christ. Cæsar was as bad in morals and in life as Thomas Paine. In him there was nothing lovable. His face was hideous—it was covered with ulcers. His entire life was so great a disgrace that Rome kept him hidden from the popular gaze; and yet such is the tendency of sin that Ingersoll found his counterpart in those who cried, "Crucify Him: we have no king but Cæsar."

Julian, one of the most talented men of any age, attempted by pen and sword to banish Christ. He lived a wretched life and died a miserable death, and his name is covered with infamy. The words of the prophet describe the condition of the class, among whom are poets and artists, geniuses of high rank and mental powers of the most remarkable brilliancy. They kindled their fires, they surrounded themselves with sparks, they made light of God's mercy and of the sinner's doom, and they have found their "bed of sorrow."

An infidel is more than a disbeliever in the divine origin of Christianity. He is the opponent of the Infinite, and seeks to be a rival. Having arrogantly abandoned the guidance and teachings of the Most High, he plunges down the steep of error, and, leaping upon the barriers to perdition, goes down into pitiless ruin. His portion is darkness, and his surroundings are the flames which dry up the sources of hope and burn up the tree. For, says the Psalmist, "Their sorrows shall be multiplied that seek after another God." They shall be left to walk in the fitful gleams of the light they have kindled, and shall be compelled at the end of their thorny way to lie down in sorrow.

Had we time to sketch the history of those who have furnished notable illustrations of this utterance you would be astonished to behold how unerring are God's prophecies, how over-mastering are His edicts. We should see a Judas shrinking abashed from the presence of his infamous employers, surrounded by the sparks of his own hate, falling upon his bed of sorrow and wailing out his life. We should behold the mightiest defenders of heathenism swept on by the resistless current of an Infinite purpose, until they were compelled to seek refuge in what they were pleased to call a leap into the dark, which was in fact a leap into perdition, and a confirmation of the utterance, "This shall ye have at my hand: ye shall lie down in sorrow." And the verdict of the world is, "Served them right." They went to their own place. They hated God. They despised reproof. They forsook the society of the redeemed and chose the company of the damned.

I. *It appears, then, the sinner's journey is perilous, because whoever continues in it loses the confidence and respect of his fellow-men.* It seems but yesterday since Ingersoll, by his oratorical ability, attracted universal notice. "Who is he?" was on every lip. When it was ascertained that he was a blatant infidel, there was a universal recoil. The better portion of mankind turned from him in disgust. Politicians, perhaps in hopes that he was not as black as men had painted him, employed him to canvass certain districts of the country. His extravagances of language were applauded. He passed from State to State, and was everywhere commended. This over, he took the lecture platform, and there lowered the mask and uncovered the heart of the man to the community. He proved himself to be utterly unworthy of esteem. He was

LOST TO THE COMMON CIVILITIES OF DECENT MEN.

Curiosity to hear and see him brought crowds to listen to him, and lecture committees, for the sake of gain, proved themselves wanting in principle. But the men went down. He went down, and became, with all his ability, simply the reviler

of Jesus Christ and the champion of the opposers of religion. His name shall rot. God will root it out. Rumor has it that he was nominated as Minister to Berlin. Even the rumor was an insult to the high character of the Secretary of State. The son of an honored minister, and the representative of an Administration that believes in God, could not go before the country weighted with "the body of this death." The nation utterly refused to be represented by a blasphemer, and this man sank to the realm of utter contempt.

He reveals his baseness. The history of wanderers from God is not cheerful reading. Julian, surrounded by Christian influences, no sooner renounced Christianity than he turned towards gods of his own forming. He reveled in the faults of Christians, and by a bold attempt endeavored to quench the Sun of Righteousness. Two years ended his success. He died, and beheld even in the hour of desolation the ark of truth careering forward as never before. Ingersoll is a poor imitation of a bad man. With utter disrespect he speaks of the Deity. He caricatures the story of man's fall, and then says: "Now, in order to regain man from the frightful hell of eternity, Christ Himself came to this world and took upon Himself flesh, and in order that we might know the way to eternal salvation He gave us a book, and that book is called the Bible, and wherever the Bible has been read men have immediately commenced cutting each others' throats. Wherever that Bible has been circulated they have invented inquisitions and instruments of torture, and they commenced hating each other with all their hearts."

THE UTTER UNTRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE MAN, APPARENT.

We quote this language to show how perfectly reckless the man is regarding truth, and how unblushingly he falsifies every page of history. He knows, as does every other student of history, that the Bible has been the forerunner of civilization, as well as of liberty, of law and of love. Very many charge upon Christianity the faults and sins of Romanism. Nothing could be more unfair. Romanism in lands where the Bible was under the ban resorted to the Inquisition and to force to propagate her faith; but where the Bible is free, Romanism is modified in character, as in Great Britain and in America, where her clergy become champions of much that is good and helpers in various reforms. Of course, it is not true that Christ came to give us a book. He gave us Himself. He declared Himself to be "*the way, the truth and the life.*" The book came afterwards, and was written by men divinely inspired, as an embodiment of the thoughts revealed and as the portrayal of the life to be lived. Again the reviler says: "I am told now—we are all told—that this Bible is the foundation of civilization; but I say

it is the foundation of hell, and we never shall get rid of this dogma of hell until we get rid of the idea that it is an inspired book." The poor man is again at fault. The Bible is no more the foundation of hell than is a guide-book the foundation of Europe. The Bible is a revelation of God. It discloses truth regarding heaven and hell, God and Christ, man in his ruin and man in his restoration. The declaration that "*we shall never get rid of the dogma of hell until we get rid of the idea that the Bible is an inspired book*" is true, and as the Bible is eternal so is the doctrine.

HE STATES THE QUESTION.

He says: "The question is, Ought a man to be sent to hell for not believing the Bible to be the work of a merciful Father?" We reply, men are not sent to hell for not believing that the Bible is the work of a merciful Father. Men are sent to hell because of just such a nature as is revealed in Robert G. Ingersoll. Men go to hell because they reject God and Christ, trample upon the overtures of mercy, and make themselves so truly obnoxious to the Christian public and the enlightened judgment of mankind that heaven to the good would be a hell to them. Imagine Ingersoll among the redeemed with these utterances against a merciful God and a loving Christ standing unrepented of and unforgiven! He could not find a hotter place in hell than he would find at the foot of the throne of the Lamb, with the purest and the best close to him. Character is of value in heaven as it is on earth. We have seen a woman in prison because no man among thousands would go on her bail bond. Do you ask why? Because

CHARACTER IS OF INESTIMABLE VALUE.

A beautiful woman comes from the country to the city. She goes with her friends to a theatre. She is deceived. She sees that she is forsaking virtue, innocence, Christ and happiness. She pleads to go home. They start. The conversation is frightful to her. She puts her fingers in her ears, and shrieks, saying, "*I want to get out!*" Why is it? She is not yet polluted. She is not willing to surrender to vileness, to debauchery and to crime. Is it strange that similar results have attended the lectures of this degenerate son of a Christian minister? Universalists have called him a fool; men who have never made a profession of religion have said such language outrages decency. It is not my purpose to quote his words. He read a string of passages to prove that God is a tyrant, an opposer of liberty, the patron of tyranny, of polygamy and what not. If any one will take the pains to refer to these chapters from which the verses were taken, they will see how full of tender-

ness and of love are the expressions there recorded, showing that the Jehovah we worship is the God of love. Ingersoll has revealed himself to be an unreasoning *atheist*.

GOD THUS DESCRIBES HIM.

"Because, knowing God, he glorified Him not as God, nor gave thanks; but became vain in his reasoning, and his foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, he has become a fool, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, to birds and to four-footed beasts and creeping things. Wherefore, God gave him up to the lusts of his heart's uncleanness, to dishonor his body, who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. And as he did not choose to retain God in his knowledge, God gave him over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not becoming; being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity; a whisperer, a slanderer, a hater of God, overbearing, proud, a boaster, a deviser of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, a covenant breaker, without natural affection—implacable, unmerciful; who, knowing the judgment of God, that they who commit such things are worthy of death, not only does them, but has pleasure in these who do them."

III. *The journey is perilous because of the companionship it invites.* That young man who begins to sport with wine goes on until drunkards become his society. Sin pollutes.

THE WAY OF THE TRANSGRESSOR IS HARD.

The fetters woven by error bind with terrific power. Look at the gambler held in the thrall of gamblers; the thief forced to accept the society of outlaws. Ingersoll might have been associated with the good and great of earth, but, instead of this, note the rabble that applaud him and the followers that attend him. If it be true that those who oppose Christ and give themselves wholly up to the devil, now as in the past, are tentanted by demons and furnish a home for some fallen spirit, we find a reason for his vindication of Thomas Paine, the man who was the glory and shame of the American Revolution, the betrayer and reviler of Washington, and who dealt such blows at Christianity as lost him the respect of the civilized world. Rev. W. F. Hatfield, who, in youth, lived near where Paine died, thus describes him:

History shows that he was arrested for political crimes and thrown into prison; that he was a confirmed drunkard; that such were his habits that Monroe, his faithful friend, was compelled to abandon him; that he attacked General Washington in a violent and profligate letter of sixty-four pages, denying to Washington all "generalship," and calling his great battles "insignificant skirmishes," while he thus ad-

dressed the Father of his Country : "As to you, sir, treacherous in private friendship and a hypocrite in public life, the world will be puzzled to decide whether you are an apostle or an impostor."

A FRIGHTFUL PICTURE.

The part of New Rochelle called Bonneville, from his influence became the "Sodom" of the region. The youth had no intellectual nor moral training, but grew up ignorant, lax and immoral. Paine was a sight to behold—a confirmed drunkard, a notorious liar, a profane wretch, so profane and filthy no decent person could remain with him. In 1804 he removed to New York, but he was so filthy that no one would keep him, and, with tears, to a Welshman, Paine cried out, "No one will take me in!" The Welshman had compassion on the miserable old man, dragged him out of a low tavern, put him in a tub of hot water, and scraped this prophet of infidelity till the dirt peeled off him. But Paine was too much for the Welshman. He had to turn him out. As he approached the close of life, one of the dirtiest, most drunken, brutal, profane, indecent, impure, blasphemous mortals that any age endured—houseless, penniless, friendless—religion at last came to his aid. A poor but pious woman, by the name of Hidden, came to his relief and cared for him.

His bones were taken to England, but England refused to have them buried in her soil. It was proposed to take them to France, but it is believed they were deposited in the ocean. Thus went down into the night a master-mind, because of the sparks he kindled when he wrote against a book that is the only sure foundation on which man can build his hopes for a future world.

And this man, beastly, brutal, drunken, worthless and in every way despicable, Robert G. Ingersoll worships, and turns his back on the Christ who died for him, whose life was so beautiful that even His enemies could find no fault with Him.

FREE THINKING IS CHANGING

in its character. It is letting go of the delicate, soft-stepping, silver-slippered type that has distinguished the attacks upon Christianity for the past few years, and it partakes again of the effrontery, the blasphemy, the terrible and vindictive hate that characterized the French Revolution. It is to be expected. Sturdy men contend for Christ. Satan sends his best warriors to meet them.

Christianity offers occasion for opposition. It demands an unconditional surrender of the faith and love of sinful man to the claims and behests of Jesus Christ as King and Saviour. It asserts authority for religious belief. Ingersoll must submit or be damned. He refuses to submit, and is condemned already, and the wrath of God even now abideth on him. Whoever rejects the Word of God and the testimony of Christ concerning the work wrought by the Spirit, is in the current of evil, and may, before he is aware, give himself to opposing the truth, impelled to it by a bitter hatred of God. It is in accordance with fixed and immutable law that a man who does wrong knowingly is made to suffer for it. The wrath of God is revealed against those who hold the truth in unrighteousness. Here is Ingersoll's peril. He knows the truth. He has

had wonderful opportunities. He has them yet. If he resists all these good influences and steps on the prostrate Christ, tramples on parental prayers and entreaties, he can have no hope. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened and have tasted the good Word of God and the powers of the world to come if they shall fall away; if they shall not come by these helps, if they shall make light of their opportunities and secure the proffered hand, and deride the love that vainly tries to woo them, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to an open shame.

IV.—THE CAREER OF THE SINNER ENDS IN HELL.

This is the alarming fact. Sail round it as you choose, make light of it as you may, *the career of the sinner ends in hell*. Here, as a minister of Jesus Christ, expecting to stand with the living and to confront the great throng who are to be judged out of the books according to the deeds done in the body, I profess my faith. My Lord says, "Enter in through the strait gate; because wide is the gate and broad the way that leads to destruction, and many are they who go in thereat."

Yonder on the swift river Niagara is a man in a tiny boat. Friends on the shore sound to him the alarm. They tell with might and main to "pull for the shore!" He laughs at them. He goes on. At length the current gets him, and he plunges into ruin. See him crying for help. The friends are compelled to say, It is too late! He dies! God has ordained that whatever beareth not fruit is rejected and is nigh unto cursing whose end is to be burned. To this bold blasphemer God says Repent! Return! If not, this shall ye have at my hand: you shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and you shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of your torment shall go up forever and ever; and you shall have no rest day or night!

God will see to it that sinners are punished. He gives to this subject His personal supervision. "Ye shall have it at my hand." The being rejected becomes the Judge and Executioner. Having rejected God and His righteousness, which is Jesus Christ, you shall be compelled to stand face to face with the scorned Christ when He appears as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Read the history of those who have held high positions as infidels, and see what is left of them and for them. Girard was impatient in his death, and could not even tie up his money so as to keep it away from doing good to Christ's cause.

Those whose names were once famous as opposers of Christianity are infamous in the estimation of mankind.

The portion of the infidel in eternity is awful to contemplate. "He shall lie down in sorrow." He cannot even stand up in opposition. He will revile no more. He will contend no more. He will *lie down* not only in unending misery, but in sorrow. Repentance shall come, but it shall be too late. He shall find that his efforts have been fruitless. The fire he kindled has been extinguished. It has burned out. The words spoken have proven to be folly. The influence exerted shall follow him. Lost himself, he shall be surrounded by the effects of his evil deeds and by the people he has destroyed.

"YE SHALL LIE DOWN IN SORROW."

God Almighty's *shall* is in the sentence. There is no doubt in it. The bed is fixed ; the state is unchangeable ; the doom is eternal ! There is but one way of escape. The Cross is the return path to God the Father, too strait for sin, for selfishness, for worldliness, but wide enough for faith, for childlike trust, for obedience and for love, human and divine. How unnecessary then the peril. Jesus is the light of life. That radiance is joy, health, life, and heaven. It is free to all. The vilest may come. The chiefest of sinners did come. Such may still come. The invitation covers all, for whosoever will come may come and find peace that passeth knowledge and joy in the Holy Ghost. And the life here is the prelude to unending bliss hereafter. **May** God add His blessing for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

